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Irvine borrowed art long before refurbishment was approved

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Lord Chancellor personally demanded the highest quality refurbishment of his official residence a month before the project was approved.

Despite repeated claims by Downing Street that the decision to go ahead with the £650,000 renovation was a matter entirely for the House of Lords, a letter obtained by *The Times* reveals the extraordinary extent of Lord Irvine of Lairg's involvement in the move.

Lord Irvine wrote to Black Rod, the most senior official in the Lords, on July 1 last year, urging peers to back a refurbishment of "a

very high and historically authentic standard".

He outlined how intended to fill the refurbished residence with more than 100 publicly-owned paintings — he had already secured the agreement of all but one of the art galleries involved — and even said that his art historian wife, Alison, was standing by to act as a tour guide. The letter implies, however, that some of the artworks were intended for his private living quarters and would not be seen by the public.

Lord Irvine also said in the letter that he had secured the services of Clive Watkinson, a senior curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum and an expert on the work of the

19th century designer Augustus Pugin, to give advice. The 25,000 hand-drawn sketches and the 550,000 wallpaper that have been the focus of allegations of extravagance are both in the style of Pugin.

Lord Irvine wanted the work done to such a high standard that he even offered to have the refurbishment done in two phases in an attempt to cut costs. But he made clear that this was not his preferred option because he would not have enough room to hang all the paintings he had obtained.

In his only statement on the subject so far, Lord Irvine said on Monday: "The decision to refurbish the residence was made by the relevant House authorities and not

by the Lord Chancellor." This was in line with earlier statements from the Prime Minister's official spokesman, who said last week: "An impression is being created that somehow it is all down to him saying, I want this and I want that and I want the other, when this is not the case."

But the letter to Black Rod spelling out the Lord Chancellor's wishes was written a week before peers had even considered the broad refurbishment proposals in the Administration and Works Sub Committee on July 8 and a full month before the project was formally agreed by peers on July 30. The letter was copied to the 15 members of the Lords Committee

and the plan they approved is in total agreement with the wishes expressed in the letter.

Lord Irvine's statement on Monday also said the public would have "substantial access" to the residence. However, it is clear in the letter that his intentions on July 1 were for it to be open for just one or two afternoons a month — and then only to art experts, peers' friends and MPs' guests.

There were two possible options, he wrote. "The first would be to limit access in some way to those with a bona fide interest in historic buildings and art, such as art historians and critics, directors and staff of major galleries, and art and architecture colleges."

He added: "In addition, parts of the residence could be opened to the public for, say, one or two afternoons a month. The arrangement would be that peers or MPs could bring groups of acquaintances/constituents, signed up in advance as for tours of the Palace."

In the letter, Lord Irvine recognised that some peers might feel that the costs were "too high to meet in one go", but he insisted: "What is in my view plain is that that these proposals are only worth implementing to a very high and historically authentic standard. I believe everyone involved to be of that view. What is now proposed will transform the residence and make it as it should be. The new

furniture, light fittings and decorations will last for a very long time and benefit future generations."

Lord Irvine said that he had decided to consult distinguished friends in the art world about the restoration some time before July 1, but denied he had made any plans before the election on May 1.

"When I learned that the restoration and refurbishment project was likely to find favour, I took steps through my friends to secure the voluntary help of many distinguished figures," he told Black Rod. "Lady Irvine and I have had a

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Princess in hospital after stroke

By ALAN HAMILTON, JOANNA BALE, STEPHEN FARRELL AND EMMA WILKINS

PRINCESS MARGARET was undergoing tests at a hospital in Barbados last night after suffering a mild stroke while on holiday on the Caribbean island of Mustique.

Buckingham Palace said that the Queen's younger sister was in a stable condition and had suffered no serious paralysis. She was responding well to treatment, and would be flown back to Britain when doctors considered her well enough to undertake the journey.

The 67-year-old Princess, who has recently given up cigarettes after years as a heavy smoker, was taken ill on Monday night while dining with friends at a house near her holiday home. She was seen by Dr Michael Bunbury, who has a clinic on the island, and after resting in his surgery she was flown by air ambulance to Barbados for a full examination.

Jane Stevens, the Princess's lady in waiting, said that it had been a "minor stroke, but nothing totally terrifying". The Princess had been in good hands with Dr Bunbury, who had arrived very quickly when summoned by the Princess's hosts.

Mrs Stevens, who had earlier been with the princess but returned to England on Sunday, added: "She is fine. She is in very good hands in Barbados. It is always frightening if you are taken ill away from home, but this was not too awful. It is an early warning. I know many people who have suffered minor strokes, and if they do as they are told, then they are fine."

The Princess has a history of



Princess Margaret was well enough to walk to the plane that flew her to Barbados

Women are still given out by MCC members

By A STAFF REPORTER

CRICKET'S most famous institution is to remain an all-male bastion.

Members of the Marylebone Cricket Club have voted by 6,969 to 5,538 to end the 211-year-old ban on women but the figures fall short of the two-thirds required to change the club's constitution.

The majority of only 55.7 per cent will be a blow to the MCC, which had supported a motion to allow women members to help to widen the game's appeal.

The result was decided after a postal ballot of 18,000 members and a special general meeting last night at Lord's cricket ground in London.

The MCC has barred women members since it was founded. Women, except for the Queen, are also prevented from entering the pavilion during play.

Last night the Equal Opportunities Commission said it was disappointed.

The chairman, Kamlesh Bahl said: "Cricket is not an exclusively male preserve. The sport is played by girls and boys at school and Lord's

Irish property millionaire Ned Ryan, and Sir Mark and Lady Weisberg — the designer Anoushka Hempel — on Monday night when she complained of feeling unwell. Her friends immediately summoned Dr Bunbury, who arrived within minutes.

Ken Will, assistant to the director of the Mustique Company, said that after undergoing tests at Dr Bunbury's clinic, the Princess was taken home to rest overnight before flying to Barbados.

The Princess had been due to leave Mustique yesterday to continue her holiday in St Lucia. The Queen, other members of the Royal Family, her daughter Lady Sarah Chano and her former husband Lord Snowdon, were all being kept informed of her condition.

The Princess's connection with Mustique began in 1960, the year of her marriage to Lord Snowdon. She first saw it while cruising the Caribbean on *Britannia* and was given a 10-acre plot by its owner Colin Tennant — now Lord Glenconner — as a wedding present. She now has a six-bedroom villa which she uses in winter to enjoy the sunshine and relaxed atmosphere among other celebrities.

Other regular visitors to the island include Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall, who have a house there, and Sergie Kausov, the Russian billionaire and third husband of Christina Onassis. Show-business celebrities including Kate Moss and Noel and Liam Gallagher of Oasis have also spent holidays on the island.

illness, mostly connected with her lungs rather than her heart. In 1993, she suffered a severe bout of pneumonia and doctors then tested for any underlying heart or lung disease. But last night Dr Bunbury told *The Times* that the Princess was in very good shape.

He added: "It was a very minor stroke, and it has not affected her in any major way. There is no paralysis or slurring of the speech. This has probably been blown out of proportion, because she is fine."

The Princess was well enough to walk to the aircraft for the 35-minute flight to Barbados, where she was taken to the 30-bed Bayview private hospital, north of Bridgetown, which mostly treats wealthy islanders and tourists from the more expensive hotels.

The Bayview, which has eight private rooms costing \$200 a night said that it had all the necessary facilities to treat stroke patients and the Queen's physician and head of her medical household, Richard Thompson, is monitoring the Princess's treatment from London. Dr Thompson, a consultant physician at St Thomas's Hospital, assisted at both of the Queen Mother's hip operations.

Princess Margaret, who was last seen in public when she visited Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother after her hip replacement operation, has been on holiday on Mustique for the past three weeks, and was visited at the weekend by her son, Viscount Linley, and his wife, Serena. She was dining with the

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Blair unveils 'finest show on earth'

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

TICKETS for the Millennium Exhibition will be sold from almost every street corner in Britain. Camelot, the National Lottery operator, yesterday won the job of ticket distributor for the Dome.

BT, one of the Dome's most loyal sponsors, also announced that all Britons over the age of nine would be given a free e-mail address to mark the year 2000.

Unveiling a preview of the Dome's contents yesterday, the Prime Minister staked his reputation on the success of the project. He promised a breakfast audience of 120 business leaders "the finest exhibition that the world has seen".

Tony Blair, trying to plug a

£75 million pound shortfall in corporate sponsorship, chose captains of industry and newspaper editors as the first people to see models of the exhibits designed to bring 12 million visitors to the Greenwich Meridian in 2000.

His choice of venue, the Royal Festival Hall, recalled the 1951 Festival of Britain which brought 8.5 million visitors to the South Bank.

The main attraction will be the world's biggest representation of the human body, a reclining nude made of steel and plastic whose sex has yet to be decided. On the right outer thigh of "Britannia" will be pictures of one million children.

Visitors, who will enter the giant's body through the lower back, will see exhibits about anatomy and medicine, look through its eyes, and leave via the foot.

The spiritual zone of the dome has been designed by Eva Jiricna, a Czech Roman Catholic, who created a glass pyramid only to learn that the

Saddam deal must be tested

The United States called for a "quick test" of Iraq's commitment to its new deal with the United Nations and Tony Blair called for a new Security Council resolution to ensure that if Saddam reneges on the inspections regime agreed this week by Kofi Annan he would face immediate military retaliation. Page 12

Taxes in Euros

Gordon Brown is to introduce laws to allow British businesses to pay taxes in the Euro from next year. The Chancellor said that the measure would be among a series to prepare for entry to the single currency. Page 10

Price of failure

Angry fund managers were counting the cost of the failure of the proposed merger of SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo Wellcome when £13.5 billion was wiped from their investments. Page 23



"What's wrong? I can't seem to get excited about the dome"

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Margaret: a life wreathed in smoke and regret

If the Princess had been allowed to marry her first love, she would have been happier and perhaps healthier, writes Alan Hamilton

HOSTS used to brand Princess Margaret the house guest from hell. Ever the royal rebel, she was the one who often acted rather less than regally but at all times demanded the unquestioning respect, and even a hint of subservience, that she felt she was entitled to as the Queen's sister.

Smoking may have been a comfort in an often strained and unhappy life, but it was also a statement of that rebelliousness born of being thwarted in her life's desire. She has been described as an actress manqué, who enjoys the performance of getting out the packet, firing the cigarette in the holder and lighting up, as much as the narcotic effect of the nicotine. She has always, within her own circle, demanded to be the centre of attention; no party

ment have tinged the life of Princess Margaret for the past 40 years and have taken their toll on her health through the long addiction to cigarettes and robust appetite for whisky.

She has had many warnings from doctors that her heavy smoking put her at high risk of heart and lung disease. But the greatest warnings of all, which she has chosen to ignore, were that her father, George VI, also a heavy smoker, died of lung cancer and that her grandfather, George V, and great-grandfather, Edward VII, also died from smoking-related diseases.

Her marriage to Lord Snowden began with promise but ended in mutual recrimination, to the extent that she suffered a nervous breakdown in 1974 from the strain of a broken and withering union. She eventually recovered well, despite occasional bouts of illness exacerbated by depression.

can finish while she is still enjoying herself, and many a host will recall a meal with the Princess in which she would drink whisky and water throughout, and stub out her endless cigarettes on the china.

Derek Jameson, the former tabloid editor and radio presenter, once recalled meeting her as she smoked a plain Players, and upbraiding her for smoking a brand so strong that it was near the top of the tar tables. "Oh no it isn't," replied the Princess, sharply. "That's Captain Full Strength."

Bitterness and disappointment.

Divorce in 1978 brought with it more serious illness. While attending the independence celebrations that turned part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands into the independent South Pacific state of Tuvalu, she was felled by a sudden and severe attack of viral pneumonia. She said that she felt for the first time that she was about to die.

Doctors were so concerned that they flew her 2,500 miles to the nearest major hospital, in Sydney. She blamed the attack on the climate rather than cigarettes and was back



The Princess at her Mustique home: holidays spent in the sunshine of the Caribbean island seemed to improve her condition, both physical and mental

in Tuvalu to resume official duties nine days later.

Her holidays in the sunshine of Mustique seemed to improve her condition, both physical and mental. She had first seen it during a Caribbean visit on *Britannia* in 1960 and its owner, Colin Tennant (now Lord Glenconner), presented her with a small plot of land and a holiday home.

Her romance with Roddy Llewellyn in the 1970s seemed to satisfy a need for a while but did nothing to improve her long-term health. In January 1985 she was rushed from her Christmas holiday at Sandringham to the Brompton Hospital in London after complaining of chest pains and a persistent cough. The Brompton is a specialist hospital for heart and lung disease.

Doctors were sufficiently concerned at the prospect of cancer when an X-ray showed a shadow on her left lung that they performed a biopsy. It proved benign but provided another opportunity for doctors to lecture the Princess on the perils of heavy smoking.

Twice in 1992, the Princess had to cancel engagements because of what were described as feverish colds or infections. Two weeks after attending the Scottish wedding of her niece, the Princess Royal, to Captain Tim Laurence on a bitter December day, she was taken by ambulance to the King Edward VII Hospital for Off-

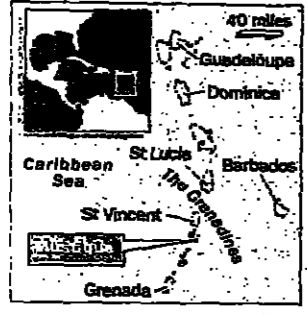
icers, London, again suffering from pneumonia. She was said at the time to be smoking 40 cigarettes a day, although she had made a minor concession by switching from plain

to filter-tipped. Even the public pleaded with her to give up. Hundreds of letters poured into her office at Kensington Palace, urging her to kick the habit and offering solutions.

Every aid that was sent in was returned with a terse note from her private secretary, Lord Napier. Her friends say that at last, and with herculean effort, the Princess has

given up cigarettes and has moderated her intake of Famous Grouse whisky. But she has not moderated her sense of her own position; she is still the imperious *grande-dame* at

the head of a small circle of friends who absolutely insists on being called "Ma'am" or, by her very closest and most favoured associates, "Ma'am darling".



Victims of the habit: George VI died of lung cancer and Edward VII from a smoking-related disease

Cause for optimism over stroke that was 'not too severe'

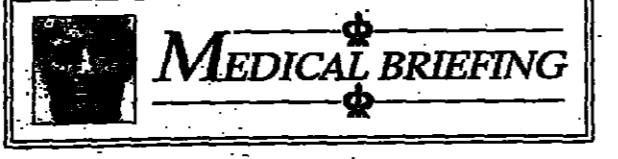
PRINCESS Margaret's flight by air ambulance to Barbados, where the standard of medicine is relatively good, allows doctors to determine the nature of her stroke and to exclude any underlying cause.

The days when a patient was put to bed, physiotherapy arranged and prayers said for a recovery are over. Now it is all-important to know whether the stroke was a result of intracranial bleeding into the brain, which in someone of Princess Margaret's age would probably be related to high blood pressure, or to an ischaemic cause, such as a clot.

Three quarters of all strokes are ischaemic and, as Princess Margaret smokes and is therefore liable to have blood that clots very readily, this is the likely cause in her case. It is also probable that her doctor, who is an enthusiast for preventive medicine, would have previously detected any raised blood pressure and would have treated it.

Appropriate brain scans will distinguish between haemorrhagic causes in which the brain tissue is destroyed by the leaking blood, and an infarction, damage to the brain tissue resulting from thrombo-embolism. Either an embolus or a thrombus may obstruct an artery and thereby prevent the tissue from receiving the necessary blood, and hence the oxygen and nutrients essential for its survival.

If the stroke is a result of thrombo-embolism, the Princess will need anti-coagula-



Dr Thomas Stuttard

tion. This is particularly important if her heart is at all irregular, and it would need to be brought back to normal. Although a modest alcohol intake reduces the likelihood of a stroke, it can cause an irregular heartbeat and hence emboli.

Strokes usually affect one of the smaller arteries of the middle cerebral artery, either so that it bleeds or is blocked. If the dominant side of the brain is affected there is a loss of speech and inability to write, if the less dominant side is involved both abilities are retained but co-ordination may be lost. After a stroke one side of the face is weakened so that the cheek and mouth lose tone and sag, and there is loss of power, even paralysis, in the limbs of one side of the body.

The history of the stroke also gives the doctor a clue as to the cause. Thrombo-embolism tends to come on comparatively slowly during the night or when getting up in the morning. In many haemorrhagic strokes, the onset is sudden and is accompanied by a severe headache. They tend to happen when the patient is exercising vigorously, watching an exciting race or chatting animatedly.

Usually the effect of the stroke will be completed within 48 hours. The stroke patient's long-term future depends on age and general health as well as the site in the brain of the damage and the importance of the artery that has been affected.

If the damage is done to the brain stem, or if the patient has suffered severe paralysis after the stroke or injury to intellectual faculties the future outlook is less good. There is nearly always some residual damage, possibly no more than loss of fine movements of the hand or a toe which is dragged when walking, but recovery continues for at least six months and in some cases longer.

The sooner the recovery starts, the better the long-term outlook. Fifty per cent of patients make such a good recovery that the stroke does not seriously inconvenience their lifestyle, and 20 per cent die in hospital. In Princess Margaret's case we can be optimistic as her stroke is described as "not severe", and the stroke is already likely to be complete. The other 30 per cent are left with an appreciable disability despite physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

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All in all, it's a classic demonstration of flexible working. And with BT's help, shows how staff can work as effectively away from the office as when they are in it. In this case, the writer was briefed while working at the company's Paris office using BT Fax Minder.

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The idea was conceived while he was working at home, and all his calls went straight to him via Mobile Extension as though he were in the office. The writer was paged the next day while at a film studio, with BT's Advanced Messaging.

These examples of keeping in touch can be equally effective when preparing sales pitches, tenders or marketing presentations. BT have already helped businesses like Solaglas, RAC and Bass to benefit from integrating mobile communications systems with those of their offices, leading to dramatic improvements in efficiency.

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home, and all his calls went straight to him via Mobile Extension as though he were in the office. The writer was paged the next day while at a film studio, with BT's Advanced Messaging.

Using his mobile phone he discussed the concept with his colleagues and how it would be developed. He typed the text on a laptop and using BT's

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Why not change the way we work?



Irvine's wife saw chance to put obscure art in public eye



Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, and his wife, Alison, who has an MA from the Courtauld Institute

THE refined eye of Alison Irvine, wife of the Lord Chancellor, is widely acknowledged to have influenced the couple's collecting tastes. With her guidance, they have built up a superb private collection of Scottish art for their rural retreat on the banks of the West Loch Tarbert in Argyll.

Lady Irvine has a degree in art from Glasgow University and an MA in the history of art from the Courtauld Institute, which she joined as a mature student a decade ago. She is described as a first-rate scholar. Although she has concentrated her energies on her family of four children, Lord Irvine of Lairg suggested in his letter last year to Black Rod that his wife could act as a guide for tours of the collection

in his apartment in the Palace of Westminster. The Lord Chancellor's wife is said to sell much of what they acquire, constantly refining their collection at their converted farmhouse in Scotland. The waterside setting, with its reflected light and a panoramic view from the large picture windows, enhances the landscapes on the walls. Art fills the home, which is believed to have as many as ten bedrooms. The couple entertain there, throwing buffet parties for up to 30 people at a time. Tours of museums are an important ingredient on all their holidays. The couple married 25 years ago; Lady Irvine was previously married to Donald Dew-

um in London and some from the Imperial War Museum. It is widely said that Lady Irvine influenced his choice of works by masters such as Augustus John, Sir William Orpen and Landseer from the Royal Academy, and of works by Boudin and Piranesi from the National Galleries in Scotland. One dealer said yesterday: "She's such a clever art historian. I'm not in the slightest bit surprised that she saw an opportunity to bring obscure paintings to a wider audience. Art is a passion. They love it and talk about it endlessly." Another dealer noted that there was a difference between enthusiasm and greed.



Letters, page 19

THE LETTER

From the Right Honourable The Lord Irvine of Lairg 1 July 1997

Dear Black Rod, You know, of course, that in accordance with the current policy on the upkeep of this building, there are plans for my Residence to be substantially restored and refurbished. The plan, with invaluable assistance from Henry Webber, Graham Goode and Malcolm Hay within the palace, and others from outside, whom I mention separately below, is to restore it so far as is possible to its original appearance. Their enthusiasm and commitment in carrying this project forward has been very great. It is well in line with the observations of the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, in her foreword to Robert Cooke's book *The Palace of Westminster* in November 1986. I enclose a copy for you to read. I hope you will include it among the papers you lay before the committee.

When I was first appointed Lord Chancellor, my Permanent Secretary, Sir Thomas Legg, impressed upon me the advantages for me both as Lord Chancellor and as Speaker, of living in the Residence. I took the view that there was much to be said for accepting that advice. Lady Irvine and I have had a lifetime's interest in fine art. We have a collection of paintings built up over 25 years and, as a result, we have many friendships in the museum and fine art world. Most of our paintings have been bought at one time or another for major public exhibitions. When I learnt that the restoration and refurbishment proposals was likely to find favour, I took steps through my friends to secure the voluntary help of many distinguished figures. Mr Peyton Skipwith, Deputy Managing Director of the Fine Art Society in Bond Street, co-ordinated many of the efforts. The services of Mr Clive Wainwright, a leading curator at the V&A and the author of the leading textbook on the work of Pugin, was secured. Both have, of course, given their services *ex gratia*. I decided it would not prove necessary to approach either the Government Art Collection or Mr Malcolm Hay, the Curator of Paintings in the palace, with a view to securing the loan of paintings to the River Room and the rest of the residence. Instead I made approaches to the Curator of the National Maritime Museum, Mr Richard Ormond, to obtain distinguished maritime paintings for the River Room; to the Curator of paintings at the Royal Academy, Mary Anne Stevens, to secure the loan of major paintings and sculptures of an appropriate period from its collection; and likewise

paintings from the Imperial War Museum and the National Gallery of Scotland. All these approaches have succeeded (subject in the case of the National Maritime Museum to a decision by the trustees with a favourable decision anticipated), so it is likely there will be available at no cost to the palace the loan of major works of art of museum quality, of a character which will enhance the image of the residence, where public functions are conducted. These museums may invite the palace to meet the modest costs of any restoration or reframing of works of art before being lent, but that is all; and the overwhelming majority of the works available are in pristine condition. If all goes well, there may be a prospect that I might be able to extend my good offices with some of these institutions to encourage them to lend elsewhere in the palace, although, as I explain below, the attraction of the residence to these curators is that it is a discrete part of the palace and with its Thames views, a fine showcase for paintings. The palace as a whole is clearly a building of outstanding national importance, and the residence is an historic part of the palace. As such it forms part of our national heritage. I am therefore enthusiastic for people to be able to see the residence in its restored condition, and to be able to enjoy the major

works of British art which will be on display there, which would not ordinarily be on display in the lending institutions from which they come. Obviously, guests at the functions that I will hold will be able to do this. However, I want to follow a more inclusive policy and to be able to extend this opportunity wider than that. There are two main options. The first would be to limit access in some way to those with a bona fide interest in historic buildings and art, such as art historians and critics, directors and staff of major galleries, and art and architecture colleges in this country and elsewhere. This approach would require some means of assessing the authenticity of requests received to visit the residence, but I would then envisage that my Pursue Bearer, Bob Moy, could take them round. This could bring wider benefits to the arts: the National Art Collection Fund, for instance, makes a modest charge to its members for tours and visits to the residence organised by them, free of charge by the palace, would benefit them and increase public access to the art and sculpture on view in the residence. I believe the same applies to visits promoted by the Victorian Society. If thought appropriate, Lady Irvine would be happy to assist herself. She is an MA in the History of Art from

the Courtauld Institute in London. In addition parts of the residence could be opened up to the public for, say, one or two afternoons a month. The arrangement would be that Peers or MPs could bring groups of acquaintances/constituents, signed up in advance as for tours of the palace. This would clearly be a more substantial undertaking and need adequate security arrangements both for the safety of those parts of the building through which people would travel and for the paintings themselves. But it would have the great benefit of ensuring that the residence and the works of art inside it were genuinely accessible to all. The areas that I would envisage being open are the corridor, the River Room with its adjacent study, and the dining room with living room en-suite, with all the other doors off the corridor being secured. I am, however, concerned at the estimates for the cost of these restoration proposals, which I have just seen. What in my view is, however, plain is that these proposals are only worth implementing to a very high and historically authentic standard. I believe everyone involved to be of that view. The costs of what was done in 1987 were high then, but the expenditure did not enhance the building and its great interior design. What is now proposed will

transform the residence and make it as it should be. The new furniture, light fittings and decorations will last for a very long time and will benefit future generations. The residence as a whole is seen by the curators, who are so enthusiastic to lend major works of art from their collections, as a prime candidate to which to lend British art. (With one possible exception only, all paintings will be British). This, I believe, has been the key factor in exciting their interest in, and commitment to, this project. They see the residence as a discrete entity with the palace, with splendid views of the Thames, which can constitute an ideal "showcase" for public appreciation of the works lent. I recognise, however, that the committee may consider that the costs of restoration and refurbishment are too high to meet in one go. If the committee so concludes, then what I suggest as a possible alternative is as follows. It could be possible for the renovation to go forward in phases, with the first phase confined to the State Rooms, ie, the long corridor, the dining room with adjacent living room, and the River Room with its study. Neither I nor my wife or family have any need to live in the residence, although it would be convenient for the reasons I was

advised. We live in Central London in the house which has been our family home for the past 25 years and, whether or not we were able to reside at the residence, we would retain and maintain our family home. At the time I arrive at my office in the morning, my journey by car takes a mere 15-20 minutes. The committee may therefore wish to consider this possibility, although it is not ideal, and to invite costings confined to the restoration of these parts. I am reasonably confident that the curators who have so generously offered to make these paintings and sculptures available would continue to do so for a restoration programme confined to the State Rooms, though the offers have been so generous that I would be obliged to refuse some, because all the paintings on offer could not be accommodated in the State Rooms alone. It would be unfortunate to have to discourage their interest in the palace even to that extent, but that would just have to be if the committee were to decide in favour of a phased programme. I would be grateful if you could ensure that this letter, along with the other papers for the committee, is supplied to them for their advance consideration. Yours sincerely, Irvine of Lairg

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السنة الأولى

And next, Your Majesty, is Sir John Elton

Erratic royal introduction is not enough to spoil star's big day, writes

Alan Hamilton

THE chubby, diminutive figure receiving his knighthood from the Queen yesterday for services to music looked familiar, but it was obviously somebody else. As he stepped forward to be dubbed in the Buckingham Palace ballroom he was announced by Lord Camoys, the Lord Chamberlain, as that hitherto unknown rock star Sir John Elton. But a second glance confirmed that it was the same Sir John Elton who had sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. Lord Camoys, new in the post and presiding over only his third investiture, appeared to have placed himself at a stroke in the category of those elderly and bemused judges who used to inquire of leading counsel: "Who are the Beatles?"

Could it be that the name of one of our most prominent and enduring popular musicians had never reached the ears of the head of the Queen's Household? The Palace was having none of that. "It was purely a slip



Sir Elton John at the Palace with his mother and stepfather, Sheila and Fred Farebrother, and his partner, David Furnish. The singer's father, Stanley Dwight, died in 1993

of the tongue on Lord Camoys's part; he had 127 names to read out. We are quite certain he has heard of Sir Elton John," a spokesman said a little snidely. Mistaken identity would,

on that occasion, have been almost forgivable. Sir Elton, who is 50 and fond of dressing outrageously, appeared at the investiture in an uncharacteristically sober black morning coat, its

lack of collar his only gesture to eccentricity. Nor did he seem to mind being announced backwards. He would undoubtedly have preferred that to being dubbed Sir Reg

Dwight, a name he dropped for professional purposes when he formed his first regular band, Bluesology, in 1965, taking instead the names of two fellow band members, Elton Dean and

Long John Baldry. In fact, he seemed thrilled, ordering a video of the ceremony and insisting that the slip be kept in. He had flown in from Los Angeles the day before, and departs again tomorrow,

but there was no way, he said, that he was going to miss his investiture. "They don't come much bigger than this," he said afterwards, wreathed in smiles. "To be knighted by

the Queen with my mum and dad here is fantastic. I am extremely proud. I love my country, and to be recognised in such a way - I can't think of anything better."

Sir Elton, having kissed his mother and stepfather, and his partner, David Furnish, the moment he was created a Knight Bachelor, continued in his happy flush of pride. "It's tremendously rewarding. I just hope I can continue to do good things and help other people." Sir Elton's work for Aids charities has been recognised, as well as his huge contribution to British exports, culminating in the record-breaking 35 million copies already sold of his recording of *Candle In The Wind 97*.

"I have always been ambitious. I've had a long career and worked hard, but I think the turning point came in 1990 when I got sober and started to do some charity work, particularly for the Aids problem. A knighthood is the icing on the cake."

Two years ago, Sir Elton went to the Palace to receive the insignia of the CBE, having been honoured for his charity work, but shunned all publicity. Yesterday he stopped long enough to have one photograph taken before climbing into his green turbocharged Bentley with parents and partner and making an early getaway for a celebration lunch. The crowds of tourists watching the Changing of the Guard outside the Palace railings did not even realise he had come and gone.

M&S sues over child labour TV accusation

By PETER FOSTER

THE good name of Marks & Spencer was destroyed in a Granada Television documentary which alleged that it sold clothes made in sweatshops by child labour, the High Court was told yesterday.

The company was also accused of failing to check on suppliers who fixed "Made in the UK" labels into garments, that were, in fact, manufactured in Morocco and Serbia. The allegations were made in a *World in Action* documentary, *St Michael - Has the Halo Slipped?*

Yesterday, Marks & Spencer began a libel action against Granada for damage caused to its reputation by the programme. George Carman, QC, representing the company, said the programme was a gross distortion of the truth that showed how "the good name and standing of a great British institution, namely Marks & Spencer, can

be savaged, assassinated, and destroyed".

Sir Richard Greenbury, Marks and Spencer's chairman, was in court as the jury of seven men and five women were shown the programme, which was first broadcast in January 1996. It focused on a factory in the town of Meknes in Morocco, where a trusted Marks & Spencer supplier subcontracted orders for the company's clothes.

Using hidden cameras and posing as businessmen, the *World in Action* team filmed the shop floor, where they claimed girls as young as 12 were working ten-hour days in stifling conditions for as little as 20p an hour. Secretly filmed workers also told the programme that many of the employees started work at the age of 12 and were often verbally abused and beaten by supervisors. The programme, presented

by the investigative reporter Martyn Gregory, alleged that one of Marks & Spencer's most trusted suppliers, Desmond's & Sons, allowed pyjamas made in the Moroccan factory to be mislabelled "Made in the UK" before being shipped back to Britain for sale in Marks & Spencer stores. The programmes said that another supplier, J.J. Dewhurst, was fined £2,500 by Customs and Excise after shirts made in Serbia were found to be labelled "Made in the UK".

After the screening, Mr Carman said the programme used "nudge-nudge, wink-wink" tactics to make it plain to the viewer that Marks & Spencer "knowingly and deliberately exploited child labour to boost their profits and knowingly and deliberately deceived customers by mislabelling goods". The case continues.

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'SUPPOSE WE GIVE IN TO THE CYNICS, THE SIGNS WOULD READ: BRITAIN YEAR 2000, NOTHING DOING'

Blair calls on the nation to unite behind dome

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

TONY BLAIR decried yesterday that the stately pleasure dome at Greenwich will be "the finest exhibition that the world has seen". He then unveiled an even more remarkable spectacle: Peter Mandelson and Michael Heseltine sitting side by side, billing and cooing like a couple of sweethearts.

The venue for the disclosure — at last — of almost half the contents of the Millennium Dome was loaded with symbolism. The people's dome is housed in the Royal Festival Hall. That surviving legacy of the Festival of Britain, the much criticised but ultimately successful extravaganza of 1951, was organised by Mr Mandelson's grandfather, Herbert Morrison.

The Prime Minister lost little time in his speech to selected businessmen and captains of industry in attacking those who have denigrated the dome. He likened them to those who denigrated the building of St Paul's, the Great

MILLENNIUM
Time to make a difference

The £50,000 logo for the dome was unveiled yesterday. The logo was designed by Martin Lambie-Nairn who created the BBC's new visual identity. The logo is responsible for the Millennium Commission's £25,000 logo, which uses the slogan "In the spirit of the future".

DATES FOR THE DOME

March 1998: begin to place roof cables on to the structure.	March: structures for the main attractions installed.
April: finalise exhibit layout plans.	May: central area completed.
June: the roof completed.	June: Millennium Pier completed.
July: ticket prices set.	July: tickets go on sale.
Sept: dome construction completed.	Aug: testing of equipment ends.
Oct: the first exhibits and attractions installed.	Nov: installation of contents.
Nov: dome power supply completed.	Dec: new services operational and three days of free previews for Greenwich residents.
Dec: businesses able to reserve the first tickets.	January 1999: staff recruited.
	December 31: dome opens.

Exhibition of 1851 and the festival 100 years later. "But just suppose we gave in to the cynics and snipers," he said. "Suppose for a second we allowed pessimism to drive out ambition. Suppose we tore down the masts, suppose we said no to the jobs and tourists, suppose we sacked the builders, returned the land to its previous contaminated state, suppose we dismissed Britain's finest designers, musicians, directors and singers, suppose we told Richard Rogers not to build his great building in this country but to move it elsewhere, then, when the eyes of the world fell on

Greenwich, people would see a derelict site and a signpost in the ground reading: 'Britain, year 2000. Nothing doing.' Wouldn't those same cynics feel just a bit unsettled? Wouldn't they feel Britain had missed an opportunity?" Mr Blair said the dome promised to be "the most fantastic day out in the world" and called for the nation to unite behind the project. When he had gone and his Minister without Portfolio and the former Deputy Prime Minister took the stage to explain their mission to journalists, they could not have been more unified without it

becoming a little unseemly. The greatest showman of the previous Government, and the man who is on his way to assuming the title in this one, sat in pointed unity. "One thing is for sure, if the Millennium Dome is a success, as I am confident it will be, it will never be forgotten. If it fails, we shall not be forgotten." Mr Mandelson said. Then: "We are doing it because Michael Heseltine had the vision to see what it could mean for this country." Mr Heseltine, in a thinly veiled attack on elements of the Conservative Party who have been tearing into Mr Mandelson, said the Conservative Government had conceived the Millennium Commission which had created the dome and he would continue as the Conservative representative on the commission. "As far as I am concerned, I will continue to do that and will ensure that this is a project for the nation and not a party political matter." Barely had the presentation ended than Francis Maude, the Tory spokesman for culture, was renewing the attack. "The project has been bedevilled with controversy and bad publicity since Peter Mandelson took over. Today's announcement that he is barely halfway to the sponsorship target confirms that the project remains on a knife-edge."

Simon Jenkins, page 18
Leading article, page 19

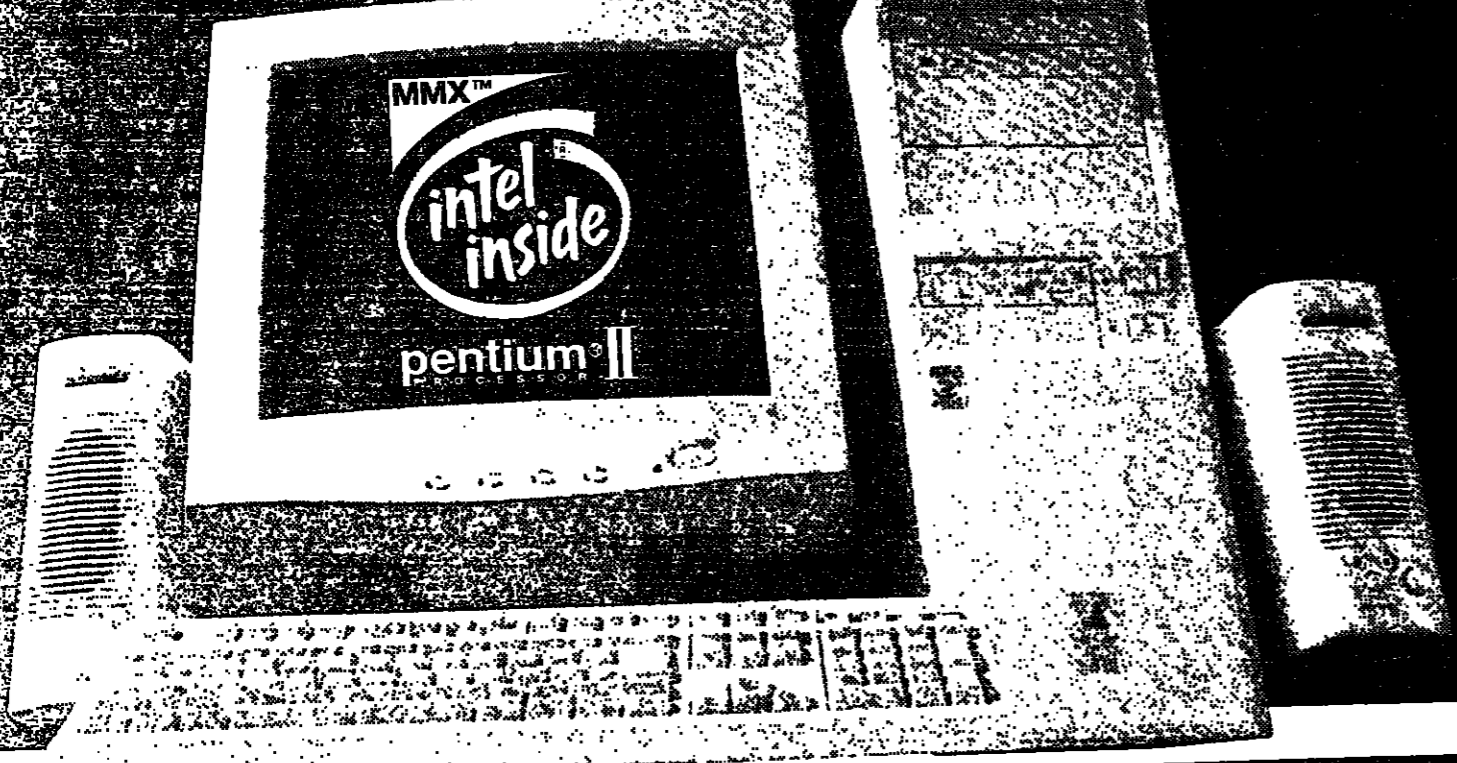


Peter Mandelson said he was confident the Millennium Dome would be a success and would never be forgotten

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Jobless can go from welfare to guide work

THE dome will help to cut the social security bill by joining the Government's Welfare to Work programme, offering single mothers and the disabled the opportunity to work as tour guides. The multinational Manpower employment company has been chosen to recruit almost 2,000 people to work at the show, which will run for a year. Mitchell Fromstein, Manpower's president, is one of the ten advisers who regularly meet President Clinton to identify the best welfare to work programmes in the United States. The company is responsible for recruiting the staff for this year's World Cup in France. Mr Fromstein flew into Britain yesterday to announce that Manpower is donating £12 million to the dome, including sponsorship of the Work Zone, called Licensed to Skill. A basic salary of about £12,000 a year has been decided for dome guides. This is set deliberately higher than similar jobs, like waxworks museum employees, because the dome's organisers want to attract the highest grade of candidates. It will be the perfect environment for physically handicapped people because the exhibits have all been designed with ramps and walkways to allow complete access to disabled people.

Lottery cash will make all welcome

THE Millennium Challenge and Festival, paid for by lottery players, are designed to ensure that nobody feels left out by the celebrations. The £100 million festival offers "community grants" of up to £5,000 for events to take place in 2000. They will encourage "social inclusion", another of the crusades championed by Peter Mandelson, the minister in charge of the dome. Money will be given to communities disadvantaged through poverty, age, race, geography or discrimination. There will be grants for events encouraging religious faith, helping the disabled, protecting the environment, preserving "our inheritance", developing lifelong learning and promoting arts and sports. The Millennium Challenge has already begun distributing £54 million for communities to promote good causes. The best ideas will be featured in the dome. They include an oral history database being collected by the British Library and BBC local radio. The story of a different town will be told every day in the dome by people from that community.

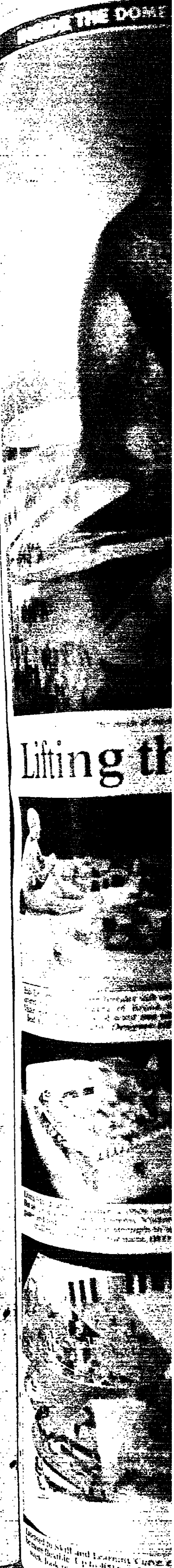
Sophisticated style shows this is no Son of Disney

THE millennium team has hit on three themes which have always fascinated humanity — the giant figure, the world of fantasy and the miniaturised world of toys. From the Colossus of Rhodes to the Statue of Liberty and the giant Buddha in Asian temples, colossal figures have long created legends and attracted the crowds. In contrast, the dome's "dreadscape", with its strange glass-fronted pods, looks like a three-dimensional version of a painting of Hell by the 16th-century Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch, with tiny human figures scuttling round in a darkened world of strange bone-shaped structures. Illustrations of the stage-set architecture of Living Island (the seaside lido) and the Spirit Level (the pyramid and garden) look like giant versions of the toys called micromachines — scale miniatures which children open up and become playsets with garages, roads and heliports. It may simply be a giant indoor theme park but the scale of lottery investment in the exhibits backed up by substantial sponsorship, looks set to ensure it has a magical sparkle. One big question concerns lighting. The world of make-believe usually depends on artificial lighting, on illumina-

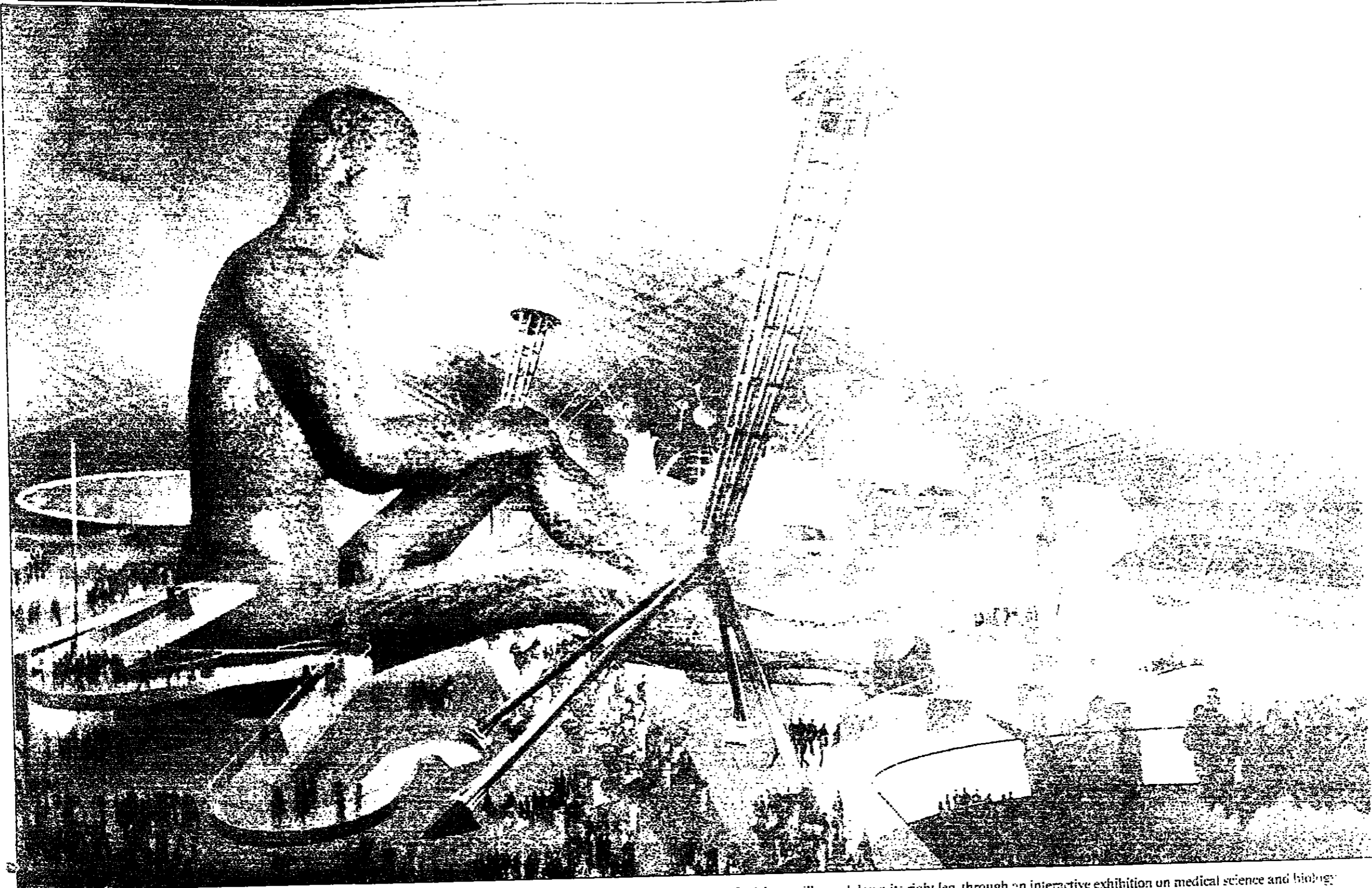


Designers have hit upon themes which fascinate humanity and always attract crowds, writes Marcus Binney

their parents' arms. The design makes the most of the huge dimensions of the dome, its impressive height and vast circumference. The images are sophisticated and original enough to generate genuine excitement, though the dome cannot simply be dismissed as Son of Disney. Leading architects and designers involved look set to ensure genuine novelty as well as a slickness of presentation that, if carried through to the finished product, will avoid the sense of tackiness that many people have been fearing. A projected building timetable runs as follows: March 1998: roof fabric begins to be placed on structure. April: plans for layout of exhibits completed. June: roof completed. July: ticket prices set. September: construction of the structure completed. October: first exhibits and attractions installed. December: businesses able to reserve first tickets. March: structures for attractions installed. May: central area completely installed. Testing of show equipment starts. June: Millennium Pier completed. July: tickets on sale to public. November: installation of contents completed. December: river services operational and three days of free previews for Greenwich residents. December 31: opening.



INSIDE THE DOME: A TEMPLE TO THE BODY, THE SPIRIT, WORK, LEISURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

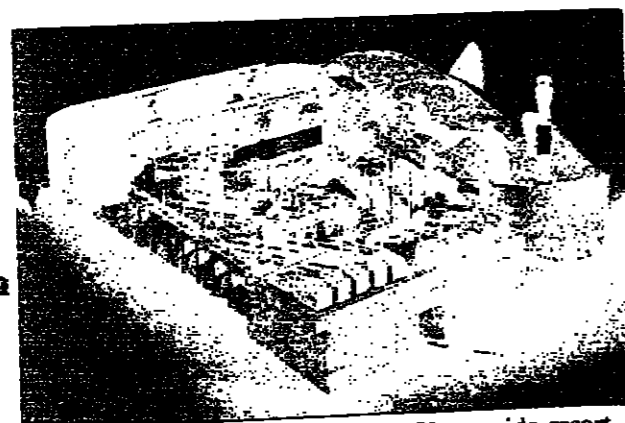


Designers' impression of the inside of the dome. The steel and plastic figure will rise to within a few metres of the roof. Visitors will travel down its right leg, through an interactive exhibition on medical science and biology.

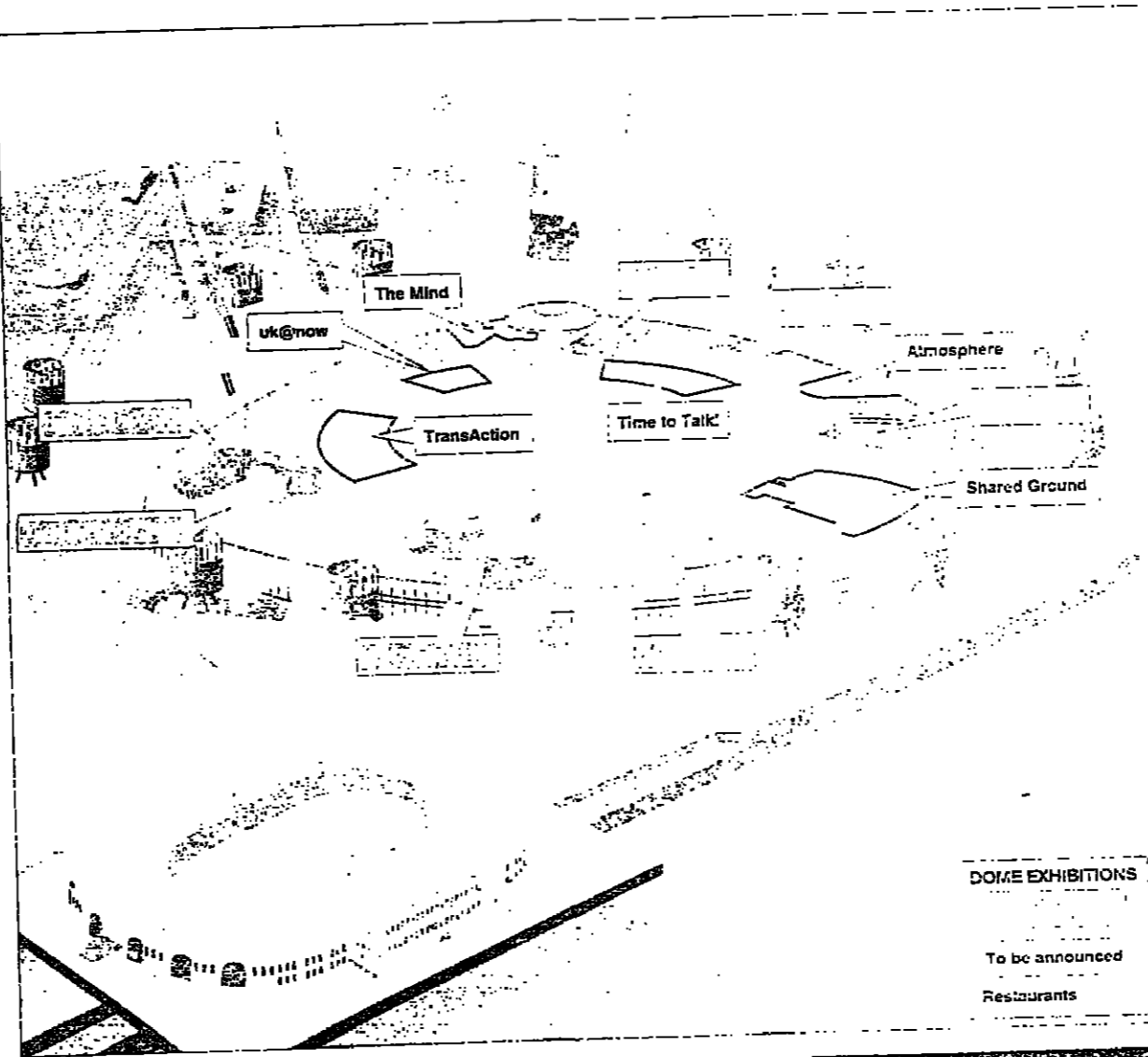
Lifting the lid on secrets of the millennium



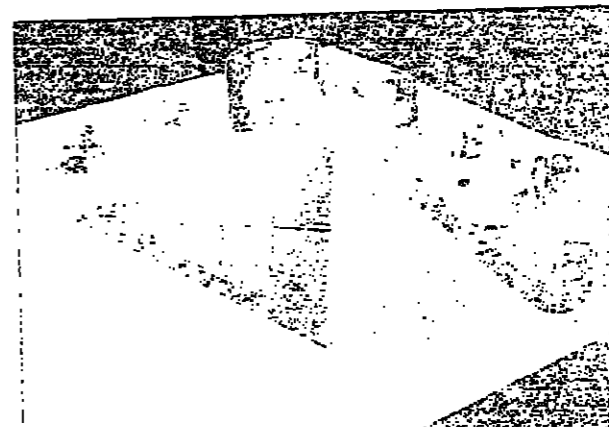
Body Zone: ten-storey figure (gender still unknown), covered in a million images of British children. Visitors enter through back of waist and take lift to head. With five-storey baby. *Designer: HP/ICM*



Living Island: at first glance a 1950s seaside resort. But all is not as restful as it seems. Visitors must try games and tests of skill and strength to understand challenges to the environment. *(WORK)*



Serious Play: multimedia displays on leisure and sport. Visitors abseil or descend in suits that simulate walls, or take the lift to a lower level to play interactive "surfball" or direct a film. *(Land Design Studio)*



Spirit: Level glass and PVC pyramid. Inside, visitors sit on stone floors. Outside, a stream runs through a garden of plants and crystals. A display shows how faiths mark rites of passage. *(Eva Jiricova Architects)*



Licensed to Skill and Learning Curve: exploration of a future when work and learning may be more flexible. Up to 400 people will don virtual reality headsets to experience how people work, look in on classrooms of the future and play an interactive game. *(Park Avenue)*

Showtime on the piazza

A PIAZZA at the centre of the dome will stage a spectacular show created by Peter Gabriel, the rock musician, and Mark Fisher, the impresario who designed *The Wall* for Pink Floyd and *Voodoo Lounge* for the Rolling Stones. Unemployed hopefuls will be invited to apply for jobs in the chorus. A training scheme will help them into the entertainment industry.

The show will be a "fable for the millennium", using the entire 165ft height and 386ft diameter of the piazza. "It could be a cross between a West End musical, a Trinidad carnival and a football match," Mr Fisher said.

Other zones will include *The Mind*, a giant brain; *Transaction*, the City of London's zone devoted to money; *Shared Ground* about British communities; *Atmosphere* about the planet; *Time To Talk*, sponsored by BF; and "uk@now", which examines Britishness.

The dome is built around one of the huge ventilators for the Blackwall Tunnel. The creators have hidden this from the public by creating a large backstage area. There is enough space to assemble a symphony orchestra and drive them en masse into the piazza on mobile scenery.



Dreamscape: beds of 16 people each take a "floatcoaster" ride on a river of dreams, flowing out of a bedroom window, through a flock of sheep, into clouds, over a London scene and into a seascape and serial dream sequence. A relaxing "pink knuckle" ride. *(Park Avenue)*

Widow wins fight to clear hanged husband

Court of Appeal quashes man's murder conviction
46 years after he was executed, reports Adrian Lee

A WIDOW'S unceasing campaign to clear the name of her husband ended in triumph yesterday, 46 years after he was hanged for the murder of a shopkeeper.

Laura Mattan, now 68 and seriously ill with cancer, broke down as the Court of Appeal quashed the conviction of her husband, Mahmood Hussein Mattan, who was executed at Cardiff prison in September 1952. Mr Mattan, born in Somalia, was executed seven weeks after being found guilty of the murder of Lily Volpert, 42, a pawnbroker, at her shop in Cardiff docks on March 6, 1952.

The throat of the spinster was cut with a razor and she had been robbed of £100. Mr Mattan, a former seaman who had settled in Wales and married six years previously, was hanged at the age of 28 mainly on the evidence of Harold Cover, a witness who placed him at the scene.

Mr Cover, now 78, was at the court yesterday as three judges were told that his account was now discredited. His description of the likely killer matched that of another



Mattan: hanged in 1952

Somali, Tehar Gass, down to his distinctive gold tooth. Gass was accused of another murder in 1954, after the stabbing of Granville Jenkins, a wages clerk, but was found to be insane. After his release from Broadmoor, he was deported to Somalia.

Mrs Mattan, who has four sons, will now seek a posthumous pardon for her husband, a police inquiry and is likely to receive substantial compensation. The family will seek up to

£2 million. The case was the first murder to be referred back by the Criminal Cases Review Commission, set up last year as a "court of last resort" to spot possible miscarriages of justice. The appeal court ruled that the case against Mr Mattan was "demonstrably flawed".

Mrs Mattan stood praying outside Cardiff prison as her husband was hanged on a rainy morning. Then aged 23, she was left with little income but never forgot her husband's protestations of innocence. His final request was that his body should not be taken from the prison until his name was cleared.

Two years ago, as the case began to swing her way, but her own health declined, Mrs Mattan had the remains exhumed and reburied at a cemetery in Cardiff. Her own final wish is that she will lie by his side. Before then, because he was a Muslim, the family will arrange a ceremony to release his soul.

Mrs Mattan gasped as the decision was announced and then began crying. Her sons Omar, 48, and Mervyn, 46,



Justice at last: Laura Mattan leaves court yesterday surrounded by her family after her husband's "demonstrably flawed" conviction was quashed

clapped. "I feel that I have waited forever for this day," Mrs Mattan said. "I still can't believe it." Her main emotion was one of anger that it had taken such a short time yesterday to destroy the case against her husband.

Mr Mattan was a merchant seaman when the couple met in the late 1940s. She was one of 11 children; her family did

not agree with her choice and for much of their marriage they were forced, by racial prejudice, to live in separate houses in the same street. At the time of the murder,

Mr Mattan had just been paid off by a steelworks. He was regarded as a rogue, who loved to gamble on greyhounds and was a regular card player. But he had no history of violence.

Mrs Mattan's campaign was taken up three years ago by Bernard and Lynne de Maid, solicitors in Cardiff. It was discovered that evidence was withheld from the defence at the original trial and that Mr Cover identified Mr Mattan after a £200 reward — enough to buy a house in the city — was offered by the victim's family.

Mr Cover, who claimed to have seen Mr Mattan leave the shop on the night of the murder, was later convicted of the attempted murder of his daughter with a razor and became a possible suspect in the Volpert case. Without his evidence, only the embers of the prosecution case remained. Michael Mansfield, QC, told the court yesterday, John Williams, QC, for the Crown, conceded that there were so many inconsistencies in Mr Cover's evidence that he was no longer a credible witness. The court was also

expected to refer the case of James Haurratty, hanged 35 years ago for the murder of Michael Gregsten and the rape of his lover, Valerie Storey, to the Court of Appeal in the next few months. It has already referred the case of Derek Bentley, hanged 46 years ago, to the court and a full hearing is expected later this year.

Last night South Wales police expressed its sympathy to the Mattans and said it would re-examine the case.

Speaking afterwards, Mrs de Maid said she believed the pressure put on Cardiff City Police, now part of the South Wales Constabulary, to solve the crime quickly meant there was never a proper investigation. "The campaign to clear her husband has kept Mrs Mattan alive. Her husband was the only love of her life."

Mr Cover left court yesterday insisting he played no part in the killing and that he had always told the truth. Quashing the conviction, Lord Justice Rose, vice-president of the Court of Appeal, said Mr Mattan's death and the length of time taken to dismiss the conviction were matters of profound regret. "The court can only hope that its decision today will provide a crumb of comfort for his surviving relatives."

The long campaign to clear her husband has kept Mrs Mattan alive. He was the only love of her life.

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Brown will clear way for firms to pay tax in euros

BY NICHOLAS WATT, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GORDON BROWN announced last night that he is to introduce new laws to allow British businesses to pay their taxes in the euro from next year.

In a sign of his determination to join the single currency after the next general election, the Chancellor declared that the new laws would be among a series of measures to prepare Britain for entry.

Businesses that want to pay taxes in the single currency after it is set up next January have complained that the rules are too complicated and restrictive. Mr Brown, appearing before the Treasury Select Committee, signalled that he has decided to act on a suggestion last month from his business advisory group that he relax the rules.

Asked by the Labour MP Brian Sedgemore whether he would introduce laws to allow

companies to pay taxes in the euro, the Chancellor said: "We will create the legislative framework in which that will happen. At the moment people can pay their taxes in dollars, or pounds or whatever."

Lord Simon of Highbury, the Trade Minister who chairs the business advisory group, which is advising the Chancellor on preparations for economic and monetary union, called on Mr Brown last month to issue "clear guidance" on the rules for paying taxes with the euro. In theory companies will be able to pay taxes with the euro when the first wave of countries join the currency in January, but the rules are so complicated that many will be put off.

Mr Brown used his announcement to underline how the introduction of the currency would have an enormous impact on the British economy. He said: "We must be

ready in 1999 for the euro when it happens."

The Chancellor praised the City of London for its extensive preparations for the new currency. He said that every government department had appointed a minister to co-ordinate preparations.

He sparred with Quentin Davies, the Tory Euro-enthusiast, who criticised him for shying away from joining EMU in the first wave in the face of opposition from the press. The Chancellor defended his decision to rule out entry in the lifetime of this Parliament, but to make preparations for entry after the next election if Britain meets a series of economic criteria he laid out last October.

Mr Brown said: "I have said there are distinct advantages in being part of a currency union. It means lower transaction costs. It should reduce the speculation between different



currencies and lower interest rates. That is why this Government has been able to say it would like it to happen."

There were practical problems to overcome, however. The British economy was at a different stage of the economic cycle to those of France, Germany and most other members of the European Union. Britain's needs were also different from those of other countries. Britain had twice as many homeowners, which meant that its people were more dependent on short-term interest rates. "We

cannot ignore these facts. Other countries have been preparing for monetary union for six years. We have not made these preparations. It is right that there should be a period of preparation and that should be a period of stability."

He also confirmed that Britain would not rejoin the European exchange-rate mechanism as part of its preparations for the euro. "There are many people who would like us to join the ERM, but I have no intention of doing so. It's not part of the Government's policy."

Blair needs to strike foreign policy balance

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

KOFI ANNAN'S successful diplomacy has given a second chance not only to Saddam Hussein but also to President Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. The United States and Britain were right to threaten military action: the weekend agreement could not have been achieved without it. As Mr Blair argued in an assured performance in the Commons yesterday: "With Saddam, diplomacy plus force equals success." But Mr Clinton and Mr Blair are very fortunate that they did not have to order the use of force this week.

A military operation, while justifiable, would have had muddled objectives and have lacked widespread international and domestic support. Unlike the Gulf War of 1990-91, America had not done the necessary preparatory work. There are, therefore, plenty of lessons, some of which Mr Blair seems to have drawn.

In a sense the Baghdad agreement offers the opportunity to put the responsibility even more clearly on to Saddam. Hence, Mr Blair is right to emphasise the need for a new United Nations Security Council resolution, and that any further prevarication or

obstruction by Saddam of the inspections "will not be accepted by any member of the Security Council and will inescapably be followed by the most severe consequences for the Iraqi regime". This will also pin down Russia and France so they are committed to the means as well as the end of ensuring Saddam's compliance.

But apart from keeping up pressure on Iraq, America also needs to appreciate why support for its stance in the rest of the Middle East was so limited, at least in public. The

Perfect peacemakers page 12

Clinton administration is seen by Arab countries as two-faced, eager to enforce UN resolutions against Iraq but weak and ineffective over the Israeli Government's obstruction of other UN resolutions. Mr Blair and Robin Cook are also impatient with the Netanyahu administration and the Foreign Secretary has put out a statement in the name of the EU presidency calling for progress on the Middle East peace process. But Mr Cook believes that an independent European initiative would be pointless and European efforts should complement, but not cut across, American efforts.

Similarly, there is a strong

case for improving relations with the new Iranian regime. While continuing to put pressure on Tehran over Iran's role as a sponsor of state terrorism (including the fatwa against Salman Rushdie), Mr Cook argued during his visit to Washington last month that it is wrong to persist with broader trade sanctions. There are few signs so far that the American Congress is willing to move on this issue.

The Gulf crisis has also raised questions about the balance of British foreign policy. Mr Blair drew smiles from Tory MPs when he praised Britain's "good and strong relations with the US" and America's "willingness to stand up and be counted" in terms that Baroness Thatcher would have applauded. The former unilateralist Mr Cook is also fulsome in his article on page 18 today about "the value of the transatlantic alliance". That is right, but what does it mean for Britain's European role? Mr Blair was yesterday at pains to claim that Europe gave "very good support", that most countries accepted that force might have to be used, and there was no conflict between Britain's European and transatlantic ties. That is not how it is seen throughout Europe. There was no common European stance. Mr Blair and Mr Cook now need to nurture Britain's relations with Washington.

PETER RIDDELL

Hague looks to US judge system

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WILLIAM HAGUE raised the prospect of American-style parliamentary confirmation hearings for judges yesterday in his first big speech on constitutional reform since he became Tory leader.

The idea, which goes much further than anything proposed by the Government, is in recognition of the move to a more politicised judiciary after the European Convention on Human Rights is incorporated into British law.

While Labour is recommending the establishment of a judicial commission, which would advise the Lord Chancellor on appointments, Mr Hague floated a more radical proposal in his speech to the Centre for Policy Studies.

"We may consider parliamentary confirmation hearings for judges. Just as the US Congress has a veto on appointments to the Supreme Court, so the House of Commons could have a veto on

senior judicial appointments in this country. It is not a route I would choose to go down unless forced to." If MPs' sovereign powers to make law were removed "then they should, at least be given a say over who will exercise those powers in the first place".

Mr Hague conceded that the Tories had underestimated the desire for constitutional change, particularly in Scotland, and indicated that his party would have to adopt its own programme for constitutional reform.

Leading article, page 19

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: from 9.30am, backbench debates; from 2.30pm, national development questions; Prime Minister's Questions; Government of Wales Bill committee; short debates on Liverpool postal services; in the Lords: details on proportional representation in council elections; state of the railways; Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act (relevant instruments); Order arrangements for asylum seekers.

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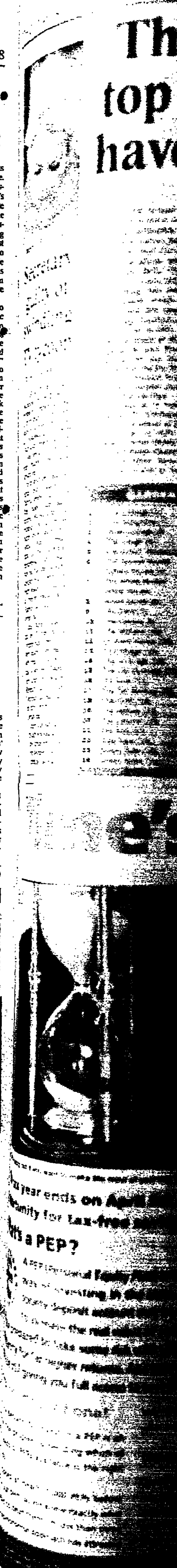
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The Cottage is top when buyers have dunchoosin

By Robin Young

EVEN IN 1998, Britons are still a nation of humble cottagers by natural inclination. A survey of house names published today shows that The Cottage and its variations have left Dunroamin', Bella Vista and The Laurels streets behind. The Cottage has overtaken The Bungalow, which topped a similar poll five years ago. Rose Cottage finished in third place, as it did in 1993.

Willow Cottage at 45, April Cottage at 46 and Pear Tree Cottage at 49 are the only newcomers to the top 50 in the survey of ten million homes by the nation's largest mortgage provider, the Halifax.

Ivy Cottage at 13, Yew Tree Cottage at 25, Orchard Cottage, up three places at 27, and Holly Cottage up eight at 33, complete a triumphant turn-out by the cottage classes, who easily outnumber those with aspirations to live in houses,

villas, manors, rectories and farms. Manor Farm, the only name in the top 50 to include either word, is a significant loser in the rankings, down from 29 to 36.

The Lodge and The Coach House, which finished fourth and seventh respectively in 1993, complete this year's top five. The housing market registered significantly increased popularity for (The) School House, up three places to sixth, (The) White House, up from 13th to seventh, and Meadow View, up from 43 to 34. The Old School House stood unchanged at 26.

The survey does not, the Halifax admits, say a lot for the standard of national ingenuity in house christening. "Overall, the top 50 names are traditional and timeless," is its verdict, though "boring" might also describe a race in

which The Hollies, The Laurels and The Firs finish almost abreast at 19, 20 and 21.

Devoted couples who live in neologisms created from syllables of their names (like Brookside's Casa Bevron, shared by Beverley and Ron Dixon, or Winger for Winifred and Gordon, and Edithon for Edward and Rhona) do not get a mention in the survey. But there are examples of the defiant or whimsical in My Way, Southern Comfort, Chaos, Bedlam, Spider Cottage and Wits' End Cottage.

Other appellations the Halifax considers sufficiently unusual to merit special mention include Andromeda, Bona Vista, Eureka, High Hopes, Hiawatha and Tally Ho.

There are no places in the top 50 for such well-known property names as Mandersley, Manada, Tara, South Fork, Emmerdale, Chequers, Brideshead, Howards End, Balmoral or Grey Gables (though The Gables comes tenth).

The Halifax blames a lack of contemporary names on the fact that it is more mature buyers who purchase the homes that lend themselves to being named. "The more mature the owners, the more conservative they are likely to be."

Terrace houses, an affordable choice for younger, first-time buyers, tend not to be named as often as semi-detached and detached houses, bungalows or period properties.

Preferred names suggest a wistful desire to be associated with nature and the countryside, even in an increasingly urban environment. Names of trees, plants, birds, animals, flowers, views and seasons recur with monotonous regularity on the nation's nameplates.

Homes, page 35



The fast-growing *leylandii* cypress: useful as an impenetrable screen, but can reach a height of 100ft

Unloved cypress hailed as pollution filter

By Nick Nuttall

BRITAIN'S most reviled or most useful tree — according to which side of the fence you live — may be good for your health. Studies have found that the *leylandii* cypress, which grows like topsy and has triggered many a neighbour's dispute, is extremely efficient at filtering particulate pollution from the air.

Researchers suggest that planting the dense and evergreen trees along city-centre roads and motorways could help to protect vulnerable people from the effects of traffic fumes.

Many of the most vociferous anti-*leylandii* voices, lobbying hard for new hedge laws mirroring those in France, where it is illegal to let a hedge grow more than two metres high, are the retired and the elderly. Paul Beckett, of the Plant Stress Unit at Sussex University and one of the researchers, admitted yesterday that their findings might chill the hearts of many.

A report published last month by the Government's Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants concluded that particles were causing an estimated 8,100 deaths a year. The Sussex scientists have been looking at the extent to which different tree species can filter the particles produced in diesel fumes.

Gail Taylor, another of the team, said the findings indicated that the best trees had rough, dense foliage with a large surface area. Evergreens were particularly useful as particle levels were often highest in winter.

Poplars, with smooth leaves, emerged as the least effective filters. Limes, with hairy leaves, filter four times as many particles as plane trees. But the star "biological filter" is the *leylandii*.

Husband jailed over electrified garage

A Falklands veteran who tried to kill his estranged wife by electrifying her garage door on the day they were divorced was jailed for nine years yesterday. Robert Miller, 40, waited in the darkened garage after wrapping a cable around the metal handle.

Susan Miller, 44, pushed open the wooden door without touching the handle. Miller, a former leading aircraft engineer, was found guilty at Liverpool of attempted murder. The couple had been in bitter dispute over access to their children.

Tankers collide

Two tankers were holed after colliding in a busy shipping lane in the English Channel. The Panamanian-registered *Oriental Violet* and the Malaysian *Eagle Memphis* collided 20 miles northwest of Guernsey. There were no reports of injuries or pollution.

Charity to close

The Tiger Trust is to close at the end of next month because of a fall in donations. All the charity's assets will be sold to make a last contribution to conservation workers in India. The trust, founded in 1992, was based in Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Players' denials

The Manchester City footballer Georgi Kinkladze, 24, and his former team-mate Nicky Summerbee, 26, denied charges of dangerous driving and careless driving. Trafford magistrates adjourned the cases, arising from an incident in Manchester last October.

Missing winner

A lottery player has yet to claim a half-share of £4.2 million. The ticket (numbers 7, 14, 25, 32, 36 and 38) was bought in Luton for the January 7 draw. The winner has 180 days to claim. The good causes have so far received £127 million in unclaimed money.

Secretary guilty of swindling TV tycoon

By Helen Rumbelow

A SECRETARY who swindled the millionaire creator of *Neighbours* out of more than £30,000 was jailed for a year yesterday at Southwark Crown Court after being convicted two weeks earlier of nine charges of false accounting.

Police said later that the actual figure taken by Patricia Ingley, 32, from Reg Grundy could have reached £180,000 after she embarked on "a champagne lifestyle" using Mr Grundy's wife's credit card and his company chequebook. The court was told that she bought designer clothes, went on exotic holidays and dined at expensive restaurants. Harrods was "like her corner shop".

Judge Robin Laurie told her: "It remains a complete puzzle why you were suddenly overcome with greed." Mr Grundy and his wife, Joy Chambers Grundy, who plays Rosemary Daniels in *Neighbours*, had entrusted Ingley to oversee their London home.

Ingley claimed that she thought she was entitled to use company money for her own expenses and was intending to pay it back.

GARDEN GATE FAVORITES	
1 The Cottage (2)	25 Yew Tree Cottage (26)
2 The Bungalow (1)	26 The Old School House (26)
3 Rose Cottage (3)	27 Orchard Cottage (30)
4 The Lodge (4)	28 The Beeches (27)
5 The Coach House (7)	29 Fair View (24)
6 The School House/School House (9)	30 Hill View (31)
7 The White House/White House	31 Wood Side (28)
8 Woodlands (6)	32 The Barn (38)
9 Hill Crest (5)	33 Holly Cottage (41)
10 The Gables (8)	34 Meadow View (43)
11 The Willows (10)	35 The Rectory (40)
12 Orchard House (16)	36 Manor Farm (29)
13 Ivy Cottage (15)	37 Way Side (33)
14 The Vicarage (15)	38 The Haven (34)
15 The Old Vicarage (17)	39 Spring Field (35)
16 Hill Side (11)	40 South View (44)
17 The Old Rectory (19)	41 The Grange (42)
18 The Croft (14)	42 West View (45)
19 The Hollies (22)	43 Gray Stones (36)
20 The Laurels (25)	44 High Field (37)
21 The Firs (20)	45 Willow Cottage (1)
22 Tree Tops (23)	46 April Cottage (1)
23 Sunny Side (18)	47 Mill House (48)
24 Green Acres (21)	48 Tangle Wood (47)
	49 Pear Tree Cottage (1)
	50 Windy Ridge (39)

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Blair declares 'piece of paper' is not enough

By James Bone in New York, Bronwen Maddox in Washington and Jill Sherman

THE United States called for a "quick test" of Iraq's commitment to its new deal with the United Nations last night and Tony Blair said a simple piece of paper was an insufficient guarantee of success.

In a Commons statement, Mr Blair also called for a new UN Security Council resolution to ensure that, if Saddam reneges on the inspections regime agreed by Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, he faces immediate military retaliation. Mr Blair insisted that the agreement negotiated by Mr Annan was not enough on its own and had to be backed by further military threats.

"A piece of paper signed by the Iraqi regime plainly cannot be enough. The Saddam Hussein we face today is the same Saddam Hussein we faced yesterday. He remains an evil, brutal dictator," Mr Blair told MPs.

Saddam had only changed his mind due to effective diplomacy backed by force and this threat had to be maintained. "With Saddam, diplomacy plus force equals success," he said.

In New York Mr Annan, who paid tribute to Mr Blair and Mr Clinton as "perfect peacekeepers", was peppered with questions yesterday by Britain and other Security

MAIN POINTS

- Iraq accepts relevant UN Security Council resolutions and will co-operate with Unscim.
- Iraq accords Unscim "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access".
- Unscim is to respect Iraq's legitimate concerns about "national security, sovereignty and dignity".
- A new team will attend to eight presidential sites.
- Unscim will report findings of this group to the Security Council.
- Other areas will be subject to current procedures.
- Mr Annan will bring sanctions on Iraq to the council's "full attention".

Council members concerned about possible loopholes in his deal, which was being acknowledged by the White House as a "win-win" pact.

After receiving a euphoric welcome back from UN staff in New York, Mr Annan went before the 15-nation council to defend the accord he signed in Baghdad to set up "special groups" of diplomats and weapons inspectors for searches of Saddam's presidential palaces.

The American and British ambassadors, while praising his efforts, posed a series of tough questions about how the agreement would operate and whether the UN Special Com-

mission (Unscim) would be able to perform its mission of rooting out weapons of mass destruction. Bill Richardson, the US representative, asked about ten questions on Unscim's rights under the agreement, which was provisionally accepted by President Clinton on Monday.

America's major concern appeared to be that, under the seven-point pact, "specific detailed procedures which will be developed given the special nature of the presidential sites" must still be worked out. Also unresolved is the identity of the "commissioner" to be chosen by the Secretary-General to lead the "special group" that goes into the palaces.

Britain and America are clearly uncomfortable with the details of the deal, but diplomats said they had little choice but to accept it and work behind the scenes to improve specific aspects.

Hans Corell, Mr Annan's legal adviser, made it clear to the Security Council that the special inspection regime for presidential palaces would apply only to the eight sites identified in the annex to the agreement.

Mr Annan made a point of thanking Britain and the United States for backing his diplomacy with the threat of force - a decision that may gall the more conciliatory Russians and French.

America is particularly worried that the new chain of command for inspections will



Kofi Annan arrives in New York from Baghdad yesterday with his wife, Nana. He met euphoria among UN staff and questions from the Security Council

remove authority from Richard Butler, the Australian diplomat heading the Unscim inspection force, who has been accused by Iraq of being a tool of the US, not the UN. In a carefully worded conditional endorsement, President Clinton said that "the agree-

ment would be an important step forward if the Iraqi Government fulfilled its promises". Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, said the agreement was a gain for his country that could eventually lead to the lifting of sanctions.

Robin Cook, page 18

UN 'triumph' masks waning of its power

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

FROM the hero's welcome Kofi Annan received from cheering staff on his return to United Nations headquarters yesterday, it is tempting to conclude that the affable Ghanaian Secretary-General has restored the prestige and efficacy of the beleaguered world organisation.

In diplomacy, however, things are seldom as they appear. The accord struck with Iraq's President Saddam Hussein is more a manifestation of the UN's weakness than its strength.

The agreement did preserve the increasingly fragile unity of the 15-nation Security Council, which had split over suggestions that it authorise the use of force to back up the UN diplomacy.

But it came at a price: in creating "special groups" comprising diplomats and inspectors to search Sad-

dam's presidential palaces, the agreement went a further step towards emasculating the UN Special Commission (Unscim) which has been one of the UN's greatest success stories.

Since the heady days at the end of the Cold War, when the UN brokered a Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan, an end to the Iran-Iraq war, independence for Namibia and reconciliation in Cambodia, as well as the collective military response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the organisation has seen its powers whittled away.

Peace enforcement operations involving the use of force have been discredited by the debacles in Somalia and Bosnia. Traditional peacekeeping has dwindled since the failure of UN troops to prevent the genocide in Rwanda - to the point where the Security Council failed to send much-needed peacekeepers to Sierra Leone to prop up the elected Government. Moreover, sanctions are now the subject of suspicion because of their

impact on the innocent in Iraq. The Unscim inspections in Iraq are the UN's last major function in its key realm of peace and security. But sources close to Unscim complain that its performance has been increasingly compromised since the then chairman, Raif Ekeus, signed an earlier Memorandum of Understanding with Iraq on access to "sensitive sites" on June 22, 1996.

In the long perspective of history, the latest deal with Iraq might come to be seen as just another nail in Unscim's coffin.

The problem for the UN, the world's only universal multilateral organisation, is to adapt to the post-Cold War world of a single superpower which is repeatedly tempted to act unilaterally.

Throughout the recent crisis, US officials have muttered darkly that, if other UN members did not toe Washington's line on Iraq, the United States might just go it alone.

Mr Annan's deal postponed that moment, but few are willing to say it will never come. Indeed, some diplomats predict it will arrive within weeks, as soon as the agreement is tested by new inspections in Iraq.

□ US pays dues: The United States made a payment of \$12.3 million (£7.3 million) to the UN to cover part of its arrears for peacekeeping activities, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said yesterday. The US owes \$927 million in UN peacekeeping dues out of a total of \$1.6 billion in arrears it has accrued, he said.

Of the 185 member-states, only 34 have paid out their share in full to cover the cost of UN peacekeeping operations, according to the spokesman. The US administration is locked in a dispute with Congress over UN arrears with lawmakers linking payment to unrelated legislation on abortion. [AFP]

The arms agreement went a further step towards emasculating Unscim

Arabs hail strategist who drove America to the brink

By Michael Binyon Diplomatic Editor

SADDAM'S GAINS

IN THE souks of Baghdad, the talk is of President Saddam Hussein's triumph. In Arab capitals across the Middle East, a sneaking sympathy for the man who defied the West is turning into open acclaim. Even Western strategists admit that the Iraqi dictator has, by his brinkmanship, won much of what he wanted. Saddam's propaganda machine is presenting the deal with Kofi Annan,

the United Nations Secretary-General, as a victory. And this time many Arabs believe it. They regard the West's decision to accept the agreement, not as proof that the threat of force worked, but evidence of America's political isolation. For Saddam, credibility in the Arab world is vital. A megalomaniac convinced of his own historical importance, the Iraqi leader has longed to be seen as the

strong man not only of his country but also of the Middle East. He has consciously revived memories of the golden age of Iraq, when the Abbasid dynasty ruled the Muslim world from Baghdad. He has posed as the leader of the Arab struggle against Israel. The Gulf War shattered this claim. However Iraq presented itself as the victor in the "mother of all battles",

other Arab states saw only humiliating defeat. Iraq's subsequent isolation and impoverishment left it unable to demonstrate any influence. By repeatedly defying the West and forcing America to the brink of war, Saddam has hijacked the Middle East agenda. In doing so, he has forced America and Britain, seen by other Arabs as the two most powerful outside forces in the Gulf, to spend huge sums deploying their forces. More importantly, he has opened a split between the West and

its former Arab coalition partners. Saddam's final victory is one that may only appear later. That is the rehabilitation of himself as a man whose tactical instinct and brinkmanship paid off. □ Paris: According to American intelligence services, Iraq has converted at least four French-built Mirage F1 fighter jets into potential "biological bombers": capable of dropping canisters containing chemical or biological agents. *Le Monde* reported (Ben Macintyre writes).

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Italy told not to cut corners on pizza

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

FED UP to the back teeth with the stodgy travesties that pass for pizzas in much of the world (including Italy itself), the Italian authorities yesterday laid down precise requirements for "genuine pizza".

To the delight of pizza chefs in Naples — which invented the dish and still claims the highest quality "original" pizzas — the Italian Standards Institute based its decree on classic Neapolitan cuisine. "We are introducing the same standards for pizza as for labels on Italian wine," an official said. "Restaurants that conform to our standards will offer customers pizzas certified as DOC, or Di Origine Controllata."

Italian cuisine is a source of pride and its secrets are jealously guarded. The new rules declare that the fundamental ingredients of pizza (toppings apart) are tomatoes, cheese and olive oil. But the tomatoes must be plum tomatoes in eight millimetre dice. Round tomatoes are permissible only on the simplest of pizzas, the Margherita, which is made of tomato, cheese and basil (the red, white and green of the Italian flag).

The cheese must be mozzarella made from buffalo milk despite the dwindling number of buffaloes in Italy. The olive oil must be extra virgin, and the only salt permitted is sea salt. The pastry must be tossed by hand — no question of a rolling pin — and the dish must be cooked in a wood oven at between 420F and 480F. The crust must be thin (no tooth-crunching overcooked pastry, and no so-called "deep pan" pizzas).

French baffled by mystery of dolphin deaths

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A MYSTERIOUS killer is preying on dolphins along the French Mediterranean coast, where corpses of the marine mammals are washing up at the rate of one a day with identical and inexplicable wounds.

Twenty-two striped dolphins have been found since February 4 on the beaches of Languedoc-Roussillon between Agde and the Spanish border, but environmentalists say they have no idea what or who is responsible for what they describe as "a massacre" of the protected species.

Most of the dead dolphins were found to have gaping wounds, about six inches in diameter, in the area of the throat or lower jaw. "All the wounds are located in almost exactly the same place. The extreme precision suggests that we can rule out accidental causes," Guy Olivet, president of the Mediterranean Dolphin Study Group, said.

Various theories have been offered to explain the deaths, including disease, aggression by a "killer dolphin" and even a conspiracy involving the American military, but three weeks after the first corpse



was found scientists concede they are baffled by the mounting toll.

"All hypotheses are possible. In the absence of any leads, we have to go forward by a process of elimination," a spokesman at the maritime laboratory in Banyuls-sur-Mer, where post-mortem examinations are being carried out on the dolphins, said yesterday.

"No hypothesis can be confirmed until the results of those tests are in," Monica Mueller, an expert in dolphin behaviour based at Banyuls and attached to the University of Paris, said.

Marine experts have ruled out the possibility of a virus similar to the "Morbillis" infection that killed 65 Mediterranean dolphins in 1995. The theory that the animals could

have been accidentally killed by trawlers also appears unlikely, since the carcasses show no signs of having been entangled in nets.

The most bizarre explanation, put forward by Leo Sheridan, the British dolphin expert, is that the animals could have been trained by the United States Navy at one of its Mediterranean bases and then killed when they had outlived their usefulness.

"These dolphins were used by the American army for military operations," Mr Sheridan, who describes himself as an expert in maritime accidents, told *Le Figaro*. "They slipped away from their handlers. The death of these deserters came from the radio-controlled explosion of their signal collars so that no one could find out their missions."

That suggestion has been rejected by the French authorities. "This species of dolphin is very sensitive and nervous and cannot be kept in captivity. They die of stress if an attempt is made to catch them," Mme Mueller said.

The striped dolphin is usually found in open waters and, according to yet another theory, the dolphins may be indirect victims of global warming.



Helmut Kohl, left, and José María Aznar, answer questions after a German-Spanish summit in El Escorial. Iraq topped the agenda at the one-day meeting

WORLD IN BRIEF

Norway to pay stay at homes

Oslo: Faced with a shortage of childcare centres, Norway plans to pay parents to stay home with their children — a proposal that has pitted feminists against traditionalists.

Parents of small children would get 3,000 kroner (€245) a month, in addition to other welfare benefits, on condition that they do not use a public daycare centre. The programme is due to start in August with one-to-two-year-olds and expand to include three-year-olds next year. (AP)

Carnival toll

Port-au-Prince: At least five people were killed and 20 injured in Haiti's capital when a carnival float on a truck ran into a crowd. Among the dead was Gérard Lafont, a pro-democracy activist. (Reuters)

Candidate killed

Delhi: The death toll in India's continuing national elections rose above 60 yesterday when a candidate and four others were killed in the eastern state of Bihar. Counting of votes starts on March 2. (AFP)

Tamils pounded

Colombo: Sri Lankan artillery and air force jets pounded Tamil rebel positions near the town of Manikulam yesterday, a day after guerrillas sank two naval vessels leaving 38 killed or missing. (AFP)

Marcos search

Manila: The Philippines, seeking billions of dollars plundered by Ferdinand Marcos's regime, has launched a new hunt for assets in Switzerland, New York and Hong Kong. (Reuters)

Dopey officials

Rabat: Moroccan customs officials who found a tonne of cannabis resin in a Spanish lorry bound for France blundered when they allowed the driver to escape while they searched the vehicle. (Reuters)

Rome to return obelisk Mussolini looted

By RICHARD OWEN

A FOURTH-CENTURY obelisk looted by Italy from Ethiopia 60 years ago is to be returned to its original site "within the next two months", Italian officials said yesterday.

The announcement appears to bring to an end a long-running dispute over the fate of the obelisk, which was removed from the holy city of Axum in 1937 by Italian troops on the orders of Benito Mussolini, the Fascist dictator. Its return was negotiated by President

Scalfaro, who visited Addis Ababa last November and formally apologised for Mussolini's invasion of what was then Abyssinia in 1935.

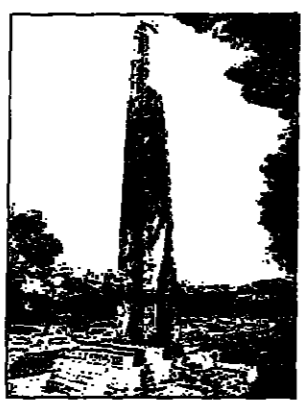
The colonisation of Ethiopia was part of Mussolini's attempt to create "an empire worthy of ancient Rome". The 60ft-high granite obelisk was erected amid triumphal ceremonies outside the Fascist Ministry for Colonial Africa, now the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, near the Circus Maximus.

Ethiopia was liberated by the British

in 1941, but the obelisk remained in Rome. Maria Luisa Tabasso, of the Ministry of Culture, said Italy was obliged to return "war booty" under treaties with its former colonies dating from 1947. The return of the monument, however, has been held up not only by political opposition from the extreme Right, but also by technical doubts about whether the obelisk could be moved without damage.

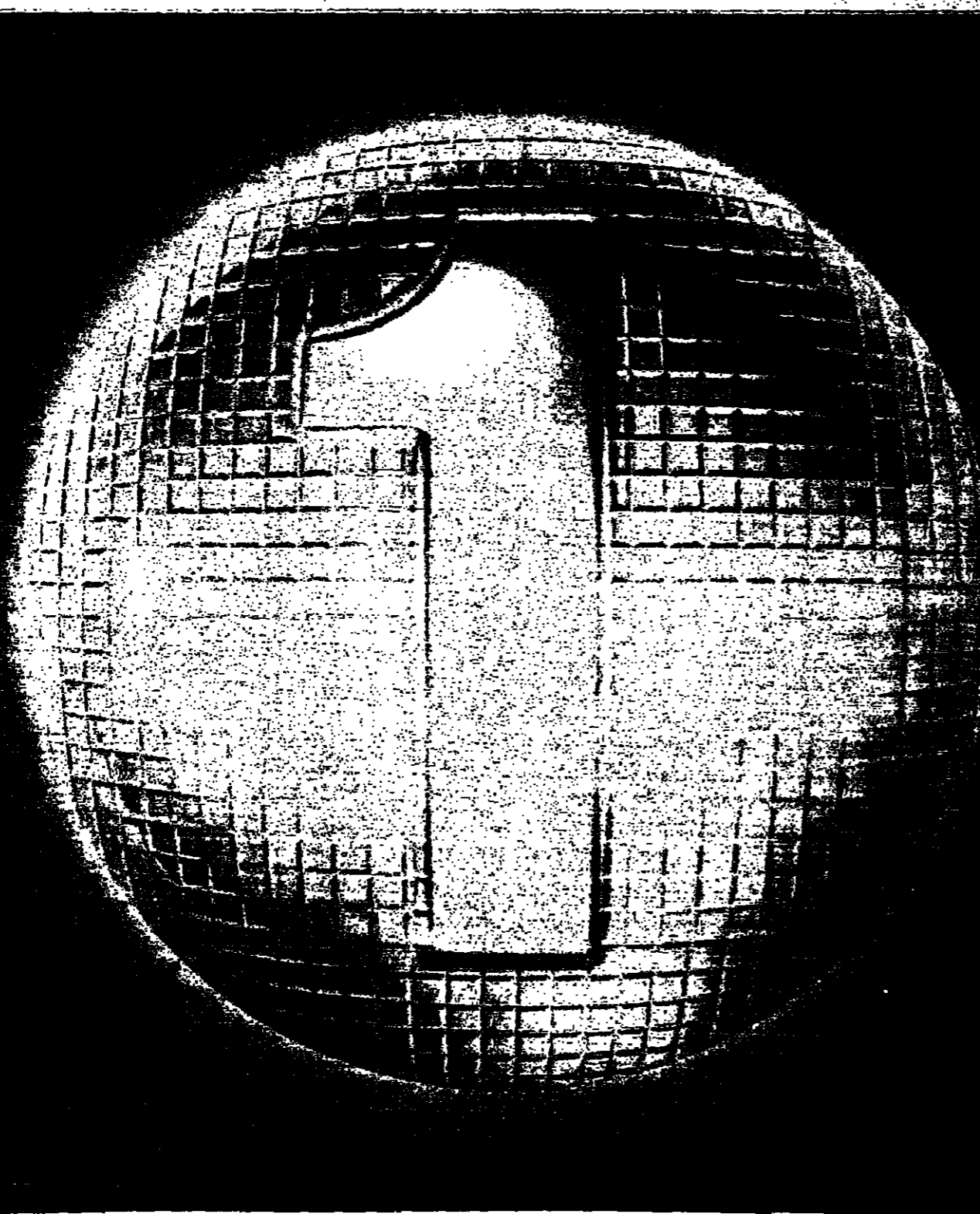
She said that in 1937 the obelisk had been found lying on the ground in five pieces at Axum, which is in an

earthquake zone. It was taken to Italy in pieces and re-erected whole, with the fragments joined together by iron rods. She said it could therefore be dismantled again for the move back to Ethiopia, where the roads were in any case inadequate for the transport of the object. Eugenio La Rocca, the Superintendent for Archaeology in Rome, said the Ethiopians had offered to replace the monument with "a work of modern art sculpted from the same kind of stone", as a "gesture of reconciliation and friendship".



The obelisk in Rome

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Liverpool girl saves cousin in US tornado

A LIVERPOOL girl emerged as a hero of the killer tornadoes that struck Florida this week. Claire Roberts, 11, pulled her six-year-old cousin, Emma, out of her bedroom moments before the family's rented mini-van came crashing through the wall and landed upside down on her bed.

"She's a hero," Emma's mother, Catherine Smith, told *The New York Times*. Their four-bedroom rented villa was demolished but the family suffered no serious injuries. After being released from hospital they were moved to a shelter before returning to England.

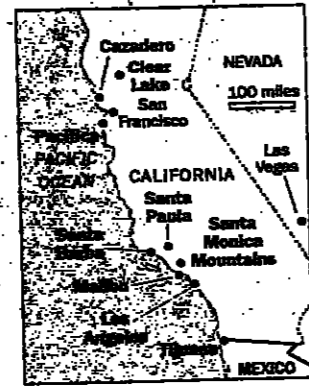
America was being pounded this week by El Niño-driven weather. California's heaviest rains in more than a century have brought death, mud and chaos to a state better known for its endless summer.

The strongest in a series of Pacific storms hit the coast before dawn on Monday and battered towns along a 400-mile front for 24 hours. Thousands were moved from homes threatened by high surf and flash floods, while road crews worked non-stop to shore up the sodden canyons of Malibu and Hollywood. Inland, two died when an 80ft tree crashed on to their car.

El Niño turns endless summer into Californian quagmire, writes Giles Whittell

In central Florida, while rescue workers used bloodhounds to look for bodies in rubble-strewn areas, the death toll yesterday rose to 38, with 13 people still missing. "Debris is piled up so bad, it may take a while to find any survivors," one emergency services official said.

As the clean-up continues



local officials are describing it as the most violent tornado on record in Florida's history, deadlier even than Hurricane Andrew which killed 15 people in south Florida in 1992.

More than 250 people were injured — including a 16-year-old girl who was blown 150 feet out of a window into a pasture — and hundreds more left homeless, after the swirling winds gusting over 200mph destroyed about 330 buildings.

Relatives of victims were left coping with tragedy. Rescue workers found the body of an 18-month-old boy who was sucked by the high winds from his father's arms a few miles from Disney World.

Others were miraculously spared. Another 18-month-old baby survived the storm with only a bump to the head after being lifted out of his room and deposited on his mattress in an oak tree.

Not since Krakatoa erupted west of Java in 1884 has so much rain drenched Southern California in a single winter, meteorologists said yesterday. That eruption hurled debris into the atmosphere that triggered record rainfall across the northern hemisphere. This year's downpours are blamed on an unprecedented warming of the eastern Pacific — an



Mopping up operations continue yesterday in La Conchita, California, after the rainstorms of Monday. At times two inches fell in an hour

intense version of the El Niño effect that last struck in earnest in 1982.

Monday's rain fell at up to two inches an hour on the Santa Monica mountains above Malibu, turning some hillsides in the costly coastal enclave into non-stop rock-falls. In downtown Los Angeles the official rainfall total for February rose to 11.96 in, with five days to go to beat the record of 13.37 ins set in 1884.

Southern California's rainfall this season is already

more than twice the expected norm for the entire year, but it pales beside the drenchings suffered further north.

On Monday, 1995 became San Francisco's wettest year since 1867. North of the city the state's largest lake rose to its highest level since 1909, flooding 500 evacuated homes and threatening dozens more. On the central coast, oceanfront homes were abandoned as 17 ft waves pounded their foundations.

States of emergency have

been declared in 35 of California's 59 counties, making state disaster relief funds available to add to federal monies provided when President Clinton declared much of the region a disaster area three weeks ago.

The cost of storm damage has so far been put at \$475 million, a sum certain to rise as homeowners, businesses and road crews dig out from the latest onslaught, which brought steady rain at an inch an hour to Ventura County.

north of Los Angeles. Mobile home parks there were wrecked and 2,000 residents of Santa Paula were moved as the Ventura River and its tributaries burst their banks.

Much of the state's north-south transport ground to a halt on Monday as the 101 Freeway from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara was flooded, the Pacific Coast Highway was blocked by landslides and signalling systems on the only West Coast rail-link were put out of action by thunder-

storms. Some businesses have suffered — the state's theme parks have been virtually empty for weeks — but others have thrived. Champion Racing, a Los Angeles bullfighting and ski resorts in Sierra Nevada now have enough snow to stay open until July.

Tourists heading to Francisco for some winter have been gravely disappointed. "This is perfect weather said one. "For Ireland."

Library will speak volumes for presidential wives

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

RARELY granted the same attention as their presidential husbands, America's first ladies are to be formally recognised for the first time in a national library devoted to the achievement of the White House spouses.

The National First Ladies Library will open in Canton, Ohio, in June as part of the bipartisan campaign to portray the wives of American leaders as thoughtful, intelligent, pioneers rather than hostesses simply concerned

with the latest design of White House china.

Yesterday, there were further plans to honour high achieving women in every walk of American life after Hillary Clinton inaugurated the library's Internet website providing a database of 40,000 books manuscripts and journals relating to the often unknown exploits of her predecessors.

"The stories of the first ladies are not just about the gowns they wore," she said. "As we approach the millennium it is only fitting that we should reflect upon our predecessors

who clear the path we now walk upon."

While endless books and articles had carefully documented the lives of the presidents, Mrs Clinton said few had been devoted to their spouses. She recounted the story of Dolly Madison who, forced to flee the approaching British Army in 1814, at first rushed to cut a portrait of George Washington from its large frame. Today the picture, a solitary memento from a White House that was burnt to the ground, hangs in the East Room. "She knew it would help bind us together"

said Mrs Clinton. The Internet site provides an interesting series of details. Eleanor Roosevelt, for example, was the first wife to travel by aeroplane; Abigail Filmore demanded that her husband seek congressional approval to establish the first library at the White House; Pat Nixon was the first presidential wife to appear in a Hollywood film; and Florence Harding helped to start the first federal prison facility for women.

The website can be reached at: <http://www.firstladies.org> and includes biographies stories and source material.



Mrs Clinton: spouses were thoughtful pioneers

Fear of US epidemic grows after young girl is bitten by rabid fox

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

A GIRL aged seven, attacked by a rabid fox in Asheboro, North Carolina, is the latest victim in America's worst rabies epidemic in four decades.

The epidemic, centred in the Southern state, has alarmed officials to such an extent that free rabies vaccinations are being offered. The re were 839 rabies cases in North Carolina last year, and that figure seems likely to double

only ten recorded cases. The attack on the girl occurred at the weekend at the North Carolina State Zoological Park, about 65 miles west of Raleigh. The girl, who was celebrating her birthday at the park, had just emerged from a baboon exhibit when a grey fox darted out of the woods and bit her left leg.

The animal released its grip only after an adult chaperone swatted it hard with a water bottle. The fox was captured

minutes later. It tested positive for rabies and was dead. The child was treated and is recovering.

The rabies problem is serious that officials in neighbouring Tennessee are "rabid racoon alert". Rabbits from North Carolina have apparently crossed state lines and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency recently gave anti-rabies vaccinations to all its par-

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Something nasty in the park

It's foul-mouthed, it's coming here - and it's going to be huge. Barry Wigmore on the cult US cartoon series, *South Park*

It is clear we are not about to see *Mary Poppins*. The following programme has coarse language and, due to its content, should not be viewed by anyone," says the warning message.

And so, naturally, millions tune in every week to *South Park*, the latest American import about to burst on to British television screens.

Galton and Simpson, in the form of their alter-egos *Stephie and Son*, were perhaps the first to bring to full TV fruition the maxim "where there's muck, there's money". Humour has sunk lower, and grown younger, since rag-and-bone-man Harry H. Corbett complained, on seeing his dad Wilfred Brambell's false teeth in the horse's water bucket: "You dirty old man: the horse has got to drink from that."

Now, winging their way to Britain from smalltown Colorado, comes a bunch of eight-year-old foul-mouthed kids who make *Stephie senior* seem positively refined. *South Park* is a series about four anally obsessed little monsters dedicated to bodily functions, dirty dainties, sacrilege and intercourse between their pet elephant and pig.

This series starts where *The Simpsons* leaves off. It is *Beavis & Butt-head* meets the *Tellytubbies* with a bad attack

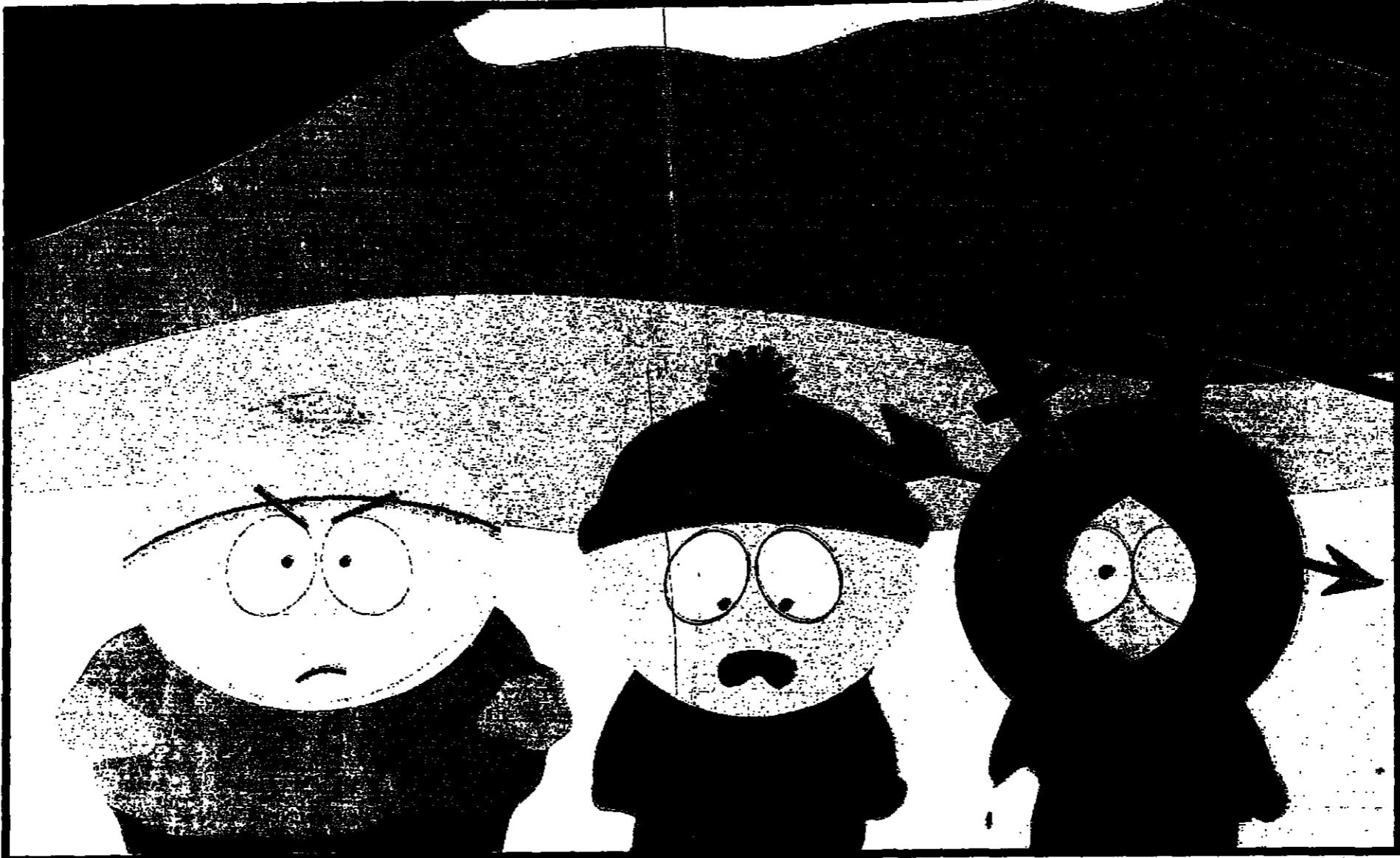
of flatulence. And if it attains in Britain anywhere near the cult following it has in America, it will be huge.

After only ten episodes, *South Park* recently scored a pop culture hat-trick by simultaneously gracing the pages of *The Washington Post*, *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* magazines. All three commented with amazement upon everything passed on, by and through the lovable, disgusting, hilarious cartoon characters. One New York newspaper observed: "The funny but nasty TV series is a giant step in the continued coarsening of the American culture."

The four main characters are Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Kenny, the poor sap who dies a gory death at least once in most episodes, giving rise to the show's catchphrase: "Oh my God, they killed Kenny."

Here is a quick, moderately gore-free, guide to the main characters: Stan Marsh is the star quarterback for the South Park Cows football team. He has a sister, Shelly, who wears a football helmet. Stan loves Wendy Testaburger, but he is so incredibly shy that he vomits whenever she talks to him. Stan's father is the town geologist, his old grandfather wants to die, and his uncle Jumbo is a gun-nut who owns the local gunshop.

Kyle Brostofski is Jewish. He enjoys playing "Kick the



South Park's characters are disgusting, but lovable. From left: Cartman, Stan and Kenny, who is killed at least once per episode, giving rise to the catchphrase: "Oh my God, they killed Kenny"

Baby" with his little brother, Ike, but his mother often ruins his fun. He has a pet elephant that has a thing going with Kitty, the pot-bellied pig belonging to Cartman - full name Eric Cartman - the

lying, cheating fat-boy of the gang who eats disgusting mixes of chocolate chicken pot pie, Happy Tarts and Cheesy Puffs. (Callers often ask where they can buy these products. They are available only in South Park.)

Kenny McCormick is impossible to understand because his anorak hood covers his mouth. He mumbles. A great Internet conversation piece is "What did Kenny say last night?" Kenny's family is poor, his father drinks a lot, and he has a little brother who has yet to be named. They call him One Dirty Little Bastard. An honourable mention goes to Chef, the school cook and football coach (voiced by Isaac Hayes, who wrote the theme for *Shaft*, a hit film and TV series). Also to Mr Garrison, the schoolteacher, who has a puppet, Mr Hat, and to the always mentioned but never seen Kathy Lee Gifford, America's equivalent, in real life, to the female half of Richard and Judy. This motley crew revels in gags about flatulence, body orifices, an Ethiopian refugee named Starvin' Marvin and flesh-eating zombies.

South Park just had to be a cartoon. No real-life sitcom could get away with its latest gross offering: Mr Hankey the talking turd. Nor with the very serious real-life plans by the television boss Doug Herzog to market Mr Hankey as an incredibly nutty chocolate bar. With \$26 million (£16 million) worth of T-shirts sold in just a few months, *South Park* is a marketer's dream come true, and as it delights in sliding along the gutter, down the drain and into the sewer, things are only getting better.

In the best Galton and Simpson tradition, *South Park* was created by another duo of comedy writers, Parker and Stone. Trey Parker, 28, and Matt Stone, 26, were struggling Hollywood filmmakers when they were recruited by a studio boss in mid-1995 to create a video Christmas card for him. He gave them \$2,000. They economised - they needed some profit - and spent \$750 making a five-minute animated film, using for characters crude paper cutouts that make the "claymation" Wallace and



Matt Stone, left, and Trey Parker: a video Christmas card led to the show's creation

Gromit look like limbo dancers. The result was *The Spirit of Christmas*, an irreverent swipe at the commercialism of the season of goodwill, featuring a kung-fu fight between Santa and Jesus. Word of this gem spread rapidly among movie-land's glitterati, and then on to the Internet. It was soon spotted by the people at Comedy Central, the cable company behind some of the most fearless cutting-edge humour on television. On the strength of that one little film, Comedy Central commissioned 13 episodes from Parker and Stone.

South Park starts on Sky 1 on March 28. Along with *The Simpsons* (Sky 1 and BBC2) and *King of the Hill* (Channel 4), critics note that when *Seinfeld* ends this spring, the three top comedy shows from the US will be cartoons. In 1995, Tom Cruise and Steven Spielberg were said to be among the first celebrities to obtain copies of *The Spirit of Christmas* video. Both have asked Comedy Central for copies of episodes they have

Web sites brim with debates about the political subtext

Blackmarket copies of the video go for thousands. Comedy Central's "cease and desist" threats of legal action against sellers made it even more desirable. Poor-quality versions circulate on the Net. Meanwhile, stars are screaming at their agents to get them a part doing voice-overs for the series. The latest recruit is the star of *Batman and Robin* and *ER*, George Clooney; he provides the voice for a gay dog named Sparky. Uncertain how long *South Park's* phenomenal success will continue, the marketers are following up the T-shirt bonanza with fridge magnets, greeting cards, bumper stickers, posters and calendars. Coming soon to a shelf near you: dolls, video games, CDs - and that sacramental chocolate bar.

Beavis & Butt-head was a huge licensing phenomenon three years ago, but this is much bigger than that," says Betsy McLaughlin, an executive at Hot Topic, a chain of novelty stores. Like *Beavis* and *The Simpsons*, the relentlessly icon-

boys declare themselves to be lesbians, too. Meanwhile, a jealous female schoolmate arranges for the teacher to be kidnapped by Arabs and shot by a rocket into the sun. (It plays better than it tells - honestly.)

Strangely, complaints from concerned parents and TV watchdogs have been muted, just a few mild observations on the Internet. "I am curious as to whether the creators are as racist and anti-Semitic as the show itself," said one.

The show's popularity is, in part, a tribute to the growing influence of the Internet, the type of people who use it and the Net's publicity power. *South Park* fans crowd the Internet's ever-multiplying Web sites about the programme and tend to listen to morning radio shows that quote heavily from past episodes, including little snippets from the song *Kyle's Mum is a Big Fat Bitch*.

At the last count there were more than 70 Web pages about *South Park*. Chat rooms brim with debates about the programme's political subtext. Does the continually murdered Kenny represent the underclass? Bars across the US hold viewing parties and trivia contests.

After seeing the pilot, Comedy Central did lay down a few ground rules. Most of the out-and-out swearwords were dropped, along with several plots, including one about the Nation of Islam.

The show still finds ways to offend: the Halloween episode featured a child in a Hitler costume. In another episode, all the little boys get a crush on a pretty substitute teacher. Told by a rejected adult male suitor that she is a lesbian, the

Why the British man losing out to Hank, Luigi and Gaston

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Why the British man is losing out to Hank, Luigi and Gaston

Is the British male really so romantically inadequate, asks Nicholas Foulkes

Last night, as I sat in Brasserie Lipp enjoying a *citron pressé* and a little *croûtin de Chavignol*, I surveyed the Parisians around me. To my left, two men were huddled over important documents. In front of me sat three others, smoking and chatting. Occasionally an old *grandes* would totter in, cigar in right hand, mistress or wife dangling from his left. It was, I thought, a normal scene late on a February evening on the Boulevard St Germain.

However, I was missing something. Somewhere in this foreign city I hoped to find the philosopher's stone of attractiveness that guarantees the attention of the opposite sex. Every male gesture seemed significant. The way that man over there waved his cigar, the way that another slurped his coffee — were these guaranteed to gain a woman's affection?

In the past ten years the number of British women choosing to marry foreign men and bring them home with them has doubled. Dating agencies are now swamped with requests from women who wish to meet men from abroad. Just what is it that is driving an increasing number of British women into the arms of foreigners?

It has to be said that the British male has not been doing himself any favours. One doesn't have to be Desmond Morris to figure out that only a singular woman would be attracted to a man who



United nations: Alec Guinness and Yvonne de Carlo in *The Captain's Paradise* proved that romance can blossom easily when partners hail from different countries

is more loving and more emotionally articulate". If what they mean are the men I recently encountered in the British Virgin Islands, I have to disagree. The manager of the hotel offered me an insight into how the American male conducts himself on his Caribbean honeymoon. The most common request from young grooms on booking a room is for a port to hook up a notebook computer to the

Internet. It would seem that the flower of American manhood is at its most "emotionally articulate" while surfing the Net. Forget saying it with flowers... just send her an e-mail. It may sound slightly ingenuous to suggest that a foreign accent is enough to seduce the female Brit. My theory is that a foreign accent, no matter what it is, sets off a Pavlovian reaction which, if ever events

take their logical course, results in a full-blown Shirley Valentine syndrome. A hint of a Texan drawl and the images are of oil wells, the thundering hooves of tens of thousands of cattle and the Dallas lifestyle. A French accent and it is all Gaulloises, Jean-Paul Sartre and a life of Left Bank bohemia. Hear the words "*due insalate verdi per favore*" and the future is filled with ancestral castles in Tuscany.

The point is that the modern British woman cannot admit to herself that she is susceptible to such risible illusions, so instead she fabricates a tissue of evidence, including such delightful fictions as the "emotionally articulate" American. Then she does what generations of British girls have done before — falls for a foreigner.

Take Queen Victoria. She married a German, then showed great fondness for Mr Brown, a Scotsman. More recently, in 1965, there is Julie Christie in *Darling*. She has a choice between the devoted Dirk Bogarde and the devilish Laurence Harvey, one portraying an academic, the other a dastardly London advertis-

ing man. Yet what does she do? Runs off to Italy to marry her *principe*. Does it make her happy? Of course not. A few years later we have Glenda Jackson in *The Romantic Englishwoman*, in which she abandons her successful author husband to follow a dubious existence with a petty criminal. However, even in the teeth of these powerful cinematic warnings, British girls continue to throw themselves at foreigners. Yet, if he wants, the British male can take his revenge. In the eyes of the rest of the world, he too is foreign, truly an exotic creature. Part Gallagher brother, part Hugh Grant, he spends his weekdays hanging out at some cool Britannia restaurant in London, pausing only to dismember a farmyard animal with his close friend, Damien. Imagine, then, her shock when she discovers that she has married a man who believes *Man Behaving Badly* to be a fly-on-the-wall documentary, sees high culture as belching in time to Clash and lives his life as if it were a novel by Nick Hornby.

THE PROBLEM WITH HOME-GROWN LOVERS IS...

SOPHIE PARKIN, writer and daughter of Molly
"British men are not romantic and that's the fault of women's liberation. The continental male allows her to forget feminism and be all fluffy and sexy."



LYNNE FRANKS, PR guru
"British men are too uptight and closed. They must learn that the rest of the world is a touchy-feely place. They need to catch up."

ALIZA REGER, daughter of Janet and chief executive of the family lingerie business
"Oh God, British men are so unromantic — apart from my husband. They would

sooner be out drinking with their mates than take their wife or girlfriend to bed for the afternoon with a box of wicked chocolates and a bottle of something fizzy."

LADY CARLA POWELL, Italian-born and married for 34 years to Sir Charles Powell, once among Margaret Thatcher's advisers.
"Charles is a very English romantic. The best compliment he can pay me is to say 'you are such a good egg'. I love that. It's so British."

I'll be out of town this weekend

It takes a great deal to make me take to the country at the weekend, but the countryside march this Sunday might just about do it. This is not a moral distaste on my part. On the whole, I am willing to strike a simple deal about hunting if you don't force me to do it, I won't stop you.

But I am flagging slightly under the anti-urban backlash. If I lived in the country I might well feel differently. Indeed, I have some sympathy, urban

as I am, with the rural point of view. Why should the countryside be interfered with by city folk who don't understand its strange, dark practices? Conversely, the city is being ruined by parochial-minded hicks who complain that it isn't more like the provincial hellhole they escaped from.

I am all for some mutual non-aggression pact, but in the meantime there is the rural case to answer. Now, clever as it is to turn the hunting lobby

into a persecuted minority, it is not altogether wise to take it that much further. The consistent line is that country folk understand about death and the cycle of life because of their experience of the hunt. But where does the argument that killing a creature teaches you about death take you?

The real truth is that either you believe that an animal life is of equal value to a human one, or you don't; the

modern sensibility decrees that it is. Beyond that, there is no argument or room for manoeuvre. This wretched wrestle for the moral high ground is unresolvable. But in the end, there will be a resolution which will have nothing to do with ethics and everything to do with numbers.

That is one reason why I'm planning to quit town this weekend: how civilised the country will be with all those country folk out of it.

All change

AS of Saturday, the old 50p piece, of which there are some £60 million worth in circulation, is no longer legal tender. But why? In which way is the heavy version of the coin any less valid a token of what 50 pence represents on Saturday morning than it was on Friday night? Is it any more or less forgivable? Is the D.G. REG FD around its rim any more or less penetrable or meaningful to those of us who don't have a faith to defend?

I remember — just — that before decimalisation we never had this problem. Every so



Nigella Lawson

often a Victorian penny would turn up in the change, and half crowns with Edward VII's head were commonplace. These coins lasted for half centuries and more, not only because they were made to last, but because the Mint designed new coins the same size and shape as the old ones.

And I mention this not in a spirit of gaudiness, when I-were-a-lad-ism but because the old system also meant that, whenever a new coin came out, slot and parking ticket machines

weren't covered with infuriating notices saying that they couldn't be used.

Witless...

IS the BBC too blokeish, as the newish Controller of BBC1, Peter Salmon, declares? Yes, it probably is. But I am not altogether convinced that

blokeishness is sex-specific. I don't like jokes about shagging and the guffawing that follows the making of same, nor because I think you need testosterone to detect the wit in it all, but because you need to share the mindset. I am not altogether sorry not to, and I'm very heartened that Peter Salmon appears not to, either.

The real culprit in terms of invasive crudity and inappropriate laddishness — this time truly sex-specific — is not BBC1, but Radio 4. Every

panel game has now been taken over by New Lad comics boasting of their uncouthness. Of course, all of this is part of the drive to change the audience, to attract just those who apparently do share the mindset. This is a doomed exercise. The sort of people who might get the joke are never going to be tuning in, and so won't get it in the first place; those who do listen will soon stop.

I don't quite get Radio 4's attitude on this, which is to value those who don't listen more than those who do. But as for BBC1: I'm all for getting more women on it, as long as we're there as people, not women.

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Firms may merge but egos can't

Patience Wheatcroft on team players who want the starring role

One business cannot have two bosses. That was the simple truth that floored the grand design for putting together Britain's two leading pharmaceutical firms. The potential cost savings of up to £1 billion a year were real enough, but the idea that two fiercely competitive chiefs could engage in power-sharing was entirely illusory.

Fashionable business gurus insist that corporate structures have been flattened and that the essential attribute that any 1990s CV will boast about is "team player". Those who have played the game successfully enough to reach the directors' floor know this to be a cruel fallacy. Companies, like countries, need strong leaders. Job titles may offer a veil of democracy but it matters not whether he is called chairman, chief executive or lord high executioner, those inside the company know who is in charge. Lord Weinstock, with typical obstinacy, refused to be known as anything other than managing director throughout his decades at the helm of GEC, but there was never any doubt that his will prevailed over all others.

Sir Richard Sykes is chairman of Glaxo Wellcome and employs a chief executive, Jan Leschly is chief executive of SmithKline Beecham and, theoretically, reports to a chairman. Behind the semantics, they each run their own show. When, just three weeks ago, they announced that they would be merging to form a £10 billion company of which Sir Richard would be executive chairman and Mr Leschly, chief executive, City enthusiasm for the deal overlooked the crucial question: who would be the grand fromage of the new giant of the pharmaceutical world?

As is now apparent, neither could accept second place in the rankings. There are hints that the falling out was precipitated by the failure to agree on how the next level of executives should be structured, but this merely underlines the fact that companies cannot be run by committee, even if it only has two members. This is why ostensibly friendly mergers, while they might be cheaper to effect than outright takeovers, can end up looking much the messier way of amalgamating businesses.

Sir Terence Conran long bemoaned the fact that he had not been prepared to pay enough to effect an outright takeover of the old British Home Stores. Instead, he opted for the cheaper merger route, and tried to melt his Habitat with BHS while all the senior personnel remained in place. The clash of cultures and personalities was agonising to behold and eventually, his vision ruined by the original parsimony, Sir Terence retired to his restaurants.

SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo Wellcome would undoubtedly be stronger together than they are apart: the stock market judged that the merger added an instant £25 billion to their value. Their portfolios of drugs are largely complementary — Glaxo's include

Zovirax, the herpes treatment, Imigran for migraine and Zantac, the anti-ulcer drug. The SKB cabinet houses antidepressants and antibiotics as well as familiar brand names such as Lucozade, Panadol and Ribena. Combining their research and development departments would produce a formidable £2 billion a year with which to go in search of new prescriptions to cure the world's ills. Sharing their overheads would have produced savings that they indicated might be in the astonishing region of £1 billion a year. In the process of saving their own jobs, the two bosses have also removed the threat of redundancy from many thousands of employees.

The argument for putting them together to create one national champion is so strong that investors must now be wondering whether they should let the deal founder on the failure of two men to agree on who should have the starring role. But this would not be the first commercial dream to be abandoned because egos intervened.

British Telecom and Cable & Wireless were seen by many in the City as a perfect partnership. Somehow Lord Young of

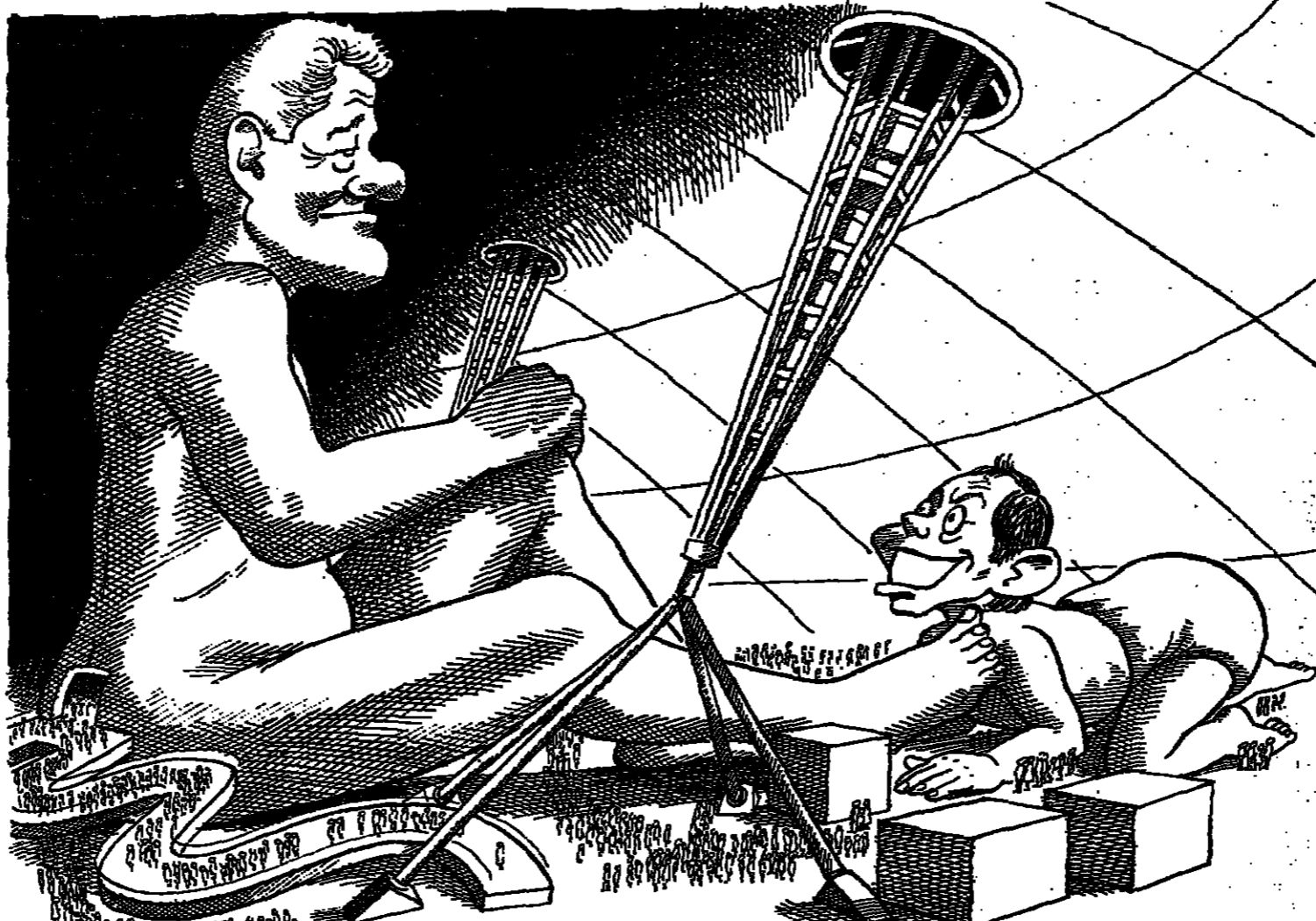
Department of Trade and Industry before it brought presidential status to the incumbent, was chairman of BTW and would not have played second string to Sir Iain, the BT chairman.

Sir Richard Sykes and Jan Leschly should have realised that neither would they be able to submerge their innate bossiness for teamwork. Sir Richard, who donned a white coat and headed for the path lab aged 16, is a remarkable combination of scientist and businessman whose stance as a straight-talking Yorkshireman belies a keen political instinct. When he took over Wellcome in 1995, it was a brilliant move which has more than justified the subsequent trauma of turning Glaxo and Wellcome into one.

Jan Leschly, a Dane, is a less obvious contender to head a global drugs business but his status as a former tennis champion, which continued on the veterans' circuit, demonstrates a determination to win. Sir Richard worked with him in the 1980s, when Mr Leschly, the older by a couple of years, was his superior. In an interview which he gave a year or two ago, Sir Richard said of his former colleague: "He has all the attributes of a leader: he's enthusiastic, energetic and gives people confidence that if they follow him, they will be OK."

But Sir Richard, now running the larger of the two companies, was not about to follow Mr Leschly.

The author is Business Editor of The Times.



THE BEST OF BRITAIN...

Dome's day hysteria

The show now unveiled is on target, on time — and already popular

Comment on the Millennium Dome has recently bordered on the hysterical. The dome has challenged beef-on-the-bone and the Lord Chancellor's Gothic loo as the butt of every joke. Abuse has escalated from extravagant and wasteful to an adverbial crescendo of inexcusably, scandalously, stupendously senseless. The maxim is grimly familiar to every actor and politician: derision has the best tunes while enthusiasm sticks in the throat. In the great museum of British cynics, the Millennium Dome will rank as Exhibit A.

Yesterday, on the site of the ill-starred 1951 Festival of Britain, I watched the latest plans (in which I declare a strong interest) revealed to an audience of critics and sponsors. It was like presenting an unwanted "love child" to a group of disapproving grandparents. They were nervous, but now the thing existed they would learn to love it. The dome was a fact of life.

The most boring thing about the dome today is what seemed most critical two years ago. It is on time. Two years ago the project faced the horrifying prospect that, at the start of 1998, the Greenwich site might be a sea of mud, as was the Festival of Britain at this stage. Money would be hemorrhaging and nobody would have heard of the dome. As it is, construction is ahead of schedule and within budget — remarkable given the political turbulence of the dome's past 12 months. As for being known, controversy has bred awareness and awareness curiosity, beyond the dreams of any publicist.

But controversy is not enough to justify spending some £420 million in lottery money and a further £150 million in corporate support. There must be some point to this adventure, and proving its "point" has emerged as the toughest challenge to confront the dome team. British opinion has become understandably averse to non-welfare public spending over two decades of parsimony. If there is money to spare, goes the cry, spend it on hospitals and schools. State support for the arts and museums is being cut back. How can the dome justify itself?

The answer is that we do still build stadiums and opera houses. We celebrate royal events and mark anniversaries. We subsidise parks and beautify public spaces. We do ostensibly pointless things with pub-

lic money because we believe the outcome to be worth it. The millennium may be a "point without a point". Celebrating the birthday of a religion or a civilisation may not be the same as that of a person. But Britain did decide in 1995 to celebrate the millennium in style and last year confirmed that decision.

The dome was never an end in itself. Its contents had to validate the structure, and for all the Nelsonian blind eyes of the critics, the theme was declared from the start. The dome was to be about Time. Since every museum in Britain was to be covering time past, the dome would grapple with time future. Its genesis happened to coincide with the popularity of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. The designer Gary Withers articulated this theme as a "circle of time". The circular space would be divided into three segments, depicting the human mind and body, human achievement and the local and global environment. These were captioned as "Who we are, What we do, and Where we live". Throughout its evolution, the dome has remained true to this inspiration. It is still in essence the dome that was announced two years ago.

What has changed has been the colossal interest in the execution of these themes. The show does not open for almost two years. The past year, since the project was rescued from the wreckage of the general election, was spent chiefly ensuring that the site was ready and the dome erected. That was the "critical path". The Richard Rogers dome is already a tourist venue, as soon will be Will Alsop's huge Underground station and Norman Foster's equally majestic roof over it. The submission from the design teams of plans for the zones was not due until this spring. The hundreds of designers working on the project have been reluctant to reveal work-in-progress. The dome is not a tunnel. It is a show, whose impresarios are understandably eager to retain an element of surprise.

As long as deadlines are being met, that is reasonable. Yesterday a glimpse of the work-in-progress was given. The dome is not a trade show or a theme park. The zones are not to be static exhibitions. Modern displays of this sort are expected to offer visitors activity and sensation. The body zone, subject of saturation publicity even before finishing its outline design, will take visitors on a voyage through the human form, watching bones, organs, arteries, veins and nerves "at work". They will look out from the eyes and witness goodness knows what sensations further down. The cranium offers a chance to do what the Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, suggested in this paper last week, to convey a sense of the myriad activities of the brain. The body's outer surface is already "booked" for millions of tiny photographs of children, the product of one of the consultative sessions now inflicted on each of the zone designers.

Hughes's other suggestion, to display the body as "the palace of the greatest genie in the Universe: the Human Spirit", challenges the zone devoted to the mind. Its task is to present in accessible form the brain's capacity for creativity: imaginative, scientific, practical and artistic. This zone sits alongside the structure produced by the architect Eva Jurica: a series of serene spaces, intended to encompass the role of religion in human experience. Work and Play operate to a different tempo. The first is built round "The Learning Curve", fixing school and skills to the changing character of modern work. Travellers through this zone will pass the schoolroom of the future and don headphones to experience the "virtual job". At the end, they will be invited to look back (or forward) over their lives and identify themselves as "surfers" or "landers", balancing work as adventure against work as security. The intention is to personalise economic activity, to bring it to life for

young people, offsetting the more conventional displays of communication and transport.

The Play zone is an electronic voyage through the experience of pleasure, showing how the games we play affect others as well as ourselves. Visitors are projected along a travelator lined with optical illusions, tricks and sensations. These are orchestrated by preceding travellers at the end of the ride. In a great hall of play, they watch on screens the delight, tension and surprise that their games cause to others.

"Where we live" takes interactivity a stage further. A pavilion of seaside, pier and promenade asks visitors to watch the impact their behaviour has on the landscape round them. Each trip, each adjustment in their life-style, is registered and combined to show how it collectively "replaces" Britain. At the other end of this spectrum, a virtual reality space walk takes visitors round the outside of the Earth, as if the interior of the dome were space itself.

Not all this may turn out as planned. The show does not open until 2000. Its essence is to be dynamic, not static. Despite the numbers likely to congregate under the world's biggest umbrella, the intention is to engage the attention of each visitor, to take each one to the farthest frontier of the present, and thus offer a glimpse of the future. The shift in title from "exhibition" to "experience" is not cosmetic. The dome is meant to be a fusion of entertainment and education unlike anything yet attempted.

A year ago it was reasonable to ask whether the game was worth a candle costing £450 million of lottery money. That question is now closed. It remains reasonable to expect those spending such money to deliver a show quite out of the ordinary. I believe they can do it. The organisers declared the remit for the dome's contents more than a year ago, and have stuck to it. Now they have offered a sight of how the contents remit is being met, by hundreds of designers working round the clock, some of them eager to keep their work a surprise.

This strange and exciting project has met every target so far set for it. The time for hanging, drawing and quartering its managers is not now. They are entitled to a two-year stay of execution, while the rest of us brush the cobwebs from the art of enthusiasm.

Simon Jenkins

Simon Jenkins is a well-known architectural critic and author. He is writing a column for The Times. The text above is a sample of his writing style, discussing the Millennium Dome project.

Vigilance vindicated by results

Robin Cook on the diplomatic lessons of the Iraq crisis

Kofi Annan's agreement with President Saddam Hussein has obtained acceptance of our primary objective — full and unrestricted access for UNSCOM throughout Iraq — about which there was no room for compromise. We must now make it stick and ensure that Saddam starts to comply with UN resolutions.

We are a long way from standing down our forces. We will keep a military presence in the area, until we are sure that Saddam's words are matched by his deeds — an insurance against the deception and broken promises that have marked the past seven years. But throughout this confrontation we have made clear our strong preference for a diplomatic solution. We never had any desire to go to war and force was always the last resort. So we will give the deal the best possible chance to work.

This will not, however, be the last time the international community is faced with such a challenge, from Iraq or some other regime with dangerous ambitions. If we do not want to repeat this crisis every time, we need to decide on the lessons we can draw from it.

First, the confrontation brought into sharp relief the danger we face from chemical and biological weapons. With the smallest quantities of anthrax or VX nerve agent, Saddam could have wiped out whole cities and obtained a dangerous leverage throughout his region. His determination to stockpile such weapons, and his history of using them, meant that doing nothing was not an option.

Now we must make sure that nobody else acquires such weapons. We already have a tight net of international conventions and export controls to prevent their proliferation. We need to tighten that net. Britain is taking a lead in establishing a verification regime to give teeth to the Biological Weapons Convention. We are working to make the Chemical Weapons Convention universal. We are improving co-ordination and intelligence-sharing between countries. There is a lot of work to do, but the events of the past few weeks show why we need to carry on our efforts.

Secondly, the confrontation underlined the importance of the UN's authority. Iraq's quarrel was not with Britain and the United States. It was with the international community. If started with Iraq's refusal to comply with UN resolutions. It led to an agreement concluded personally with the UN Secretary-General. At stake was not just the stability of the Gulf, but the credibility of the UN. If we had not been so determined to enforce the UN resolutions, that authority would have been gravely weakened. It would have sent a message to every wayward regime that UN resolutions can be flouted with impunity. I hope that our firm response reinforced that the UN is the legitimate voice of the international community, and that we will not stand by while its will is ignored.

Which brings us to the third lesson. Throughout the confrontation, Saddam's tactic was to try to split the permanent members of the Security Council. He thought that Russia and France were less willing to use force than Britain and America, and he tried to drive a wedge between us. Through constant communication and a determination not to let him succeed, we prevented this from happening. Britain took an impressive lead at the UN throughout the crisis, and our diplomacy was instrumental in ensuring that the Secretary-General went to Baghdad with the full authority of the Security Council. Whatever our differences, we all stuck firmly to the basic principle — that UNSCOM should have free and unrestricted access throughout Iraq. We needed to stay firm, and stay together. We did so.

The crisis was also a reminder of the value of the transatlantic alliance. Our joint impact went far beyond the shadow of military preparations. I spoke almost daily to Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State. Our frequent discussions greatly helped in making sure our countries worked together in New York and in the Gulf. That co-ordination between us, and between our diplomats, provided a key foundation for the successful outcome of Mr Annan's talks. It is an alliance we need to keep in good repair.

And there is a lesson about the European response to the crisis as well. The Europeans were predictably eager to allege a limp European response to the Iraqi threat. But Europe was united on the key principle at stake, and was firmly behind the efforts to find a diplomatic solution. There was a large majority that recognised the need to back diplomacy with the use of force. Lastly, there is one general truth about the nature of diplomacy. No one wanted to use force. Air strikes were always the last option. But they had to remain an option. Britain and America recognised that if diplomacy was to succeed with Saddam, it needed to have behind it the clear threat of military action. As Mr Annan said in Baghdad, diplomacy can achieve much more when backed with firmness and force. Our strategy has been vindicated.

Alan Coren is away.

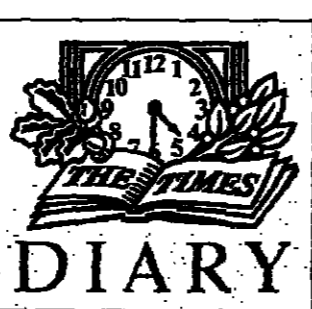
One owner

A SPEEDY coupe used by Mussolini and his mistress as a getaway car towards the end of World War II is for sale — and is being eyed by British car collectors. It Duce presented the Fiat 2800 as a love token to his paramour, Clara Petacci, at the peak of his powers, decking it out with "special coachwork" and providing a chauffeur. In April 1945, after the Allies had invaded Italy and with the partisans on his heels, the love-stricken dictator fled in the Fiat with Clara (pictured), in a vain attempt to reach a plane waiting to fly them to Switzerland. They were intercepted by partisans, executed and their bodies taken to Milan. They were strung up in a public square.



THE news from Mustique has devastated and amazed Princess Margaret's friends. "The terrible irony is that I have rarely seen her look better," says one intimate. "She has lost weight and will never have more than three whiskies an evening. During the day she has taken to drinking barley water."

Simon says... MORE strife attends Lord Simon of Highbury, the Trade Minister



involved in the BP shares controversy: what did he do with the profit from the £2.3 million BP shareholding he was forced to sell? To choke off criticism, the minister announced that he would give the £250,000 to charity. "This is a personal decision," he announced very publicly last August. The RAF Benevolent Fund and Simon's old school, Christ's Hospital, were mooted as potential beneficiaries. Six months on, Simon and his cronies are reluctant to say what has happened to the loot. The Conservative MP, John Bercow, is pestering the minister but is being told by Simon and his boss, Margaret Beckett, that the decision "has no bearing" on his role as a minister. Now Lord Tebbit is to take up the battle in the House of Lords. I am sure Simon has nothing to hide and will soon clear up this looting matter.

WHO said Baroness Thatcher is always a tub-thumping patriot? Larry King, American commentator, tells me of a chat he had with the former PM. "The best year of all the years in the past 500 years," King reports Thatcher as saying, "was 1776 when former Englishmen took to battle for a concept that changed the world forever."

Limited edition

NICK LEESON, the erstwhile trader now languishing in a Singapore prison, is developing a new career: as a writer for the Manchester City fanzine. In his first feature he laments the club's terrible dive in form. "I can only get better," he reflects. "I can't believe what's happening." Problems allow him only one sheet of paper per article. Sue Wallace, the publisher, remarks: "He has to write in very small letters."

PRINCESS MARGARET'S progress is being closely monitored by Viscount Ullswater who, as I reported here earlier, is due to take over as her private secretary in July. The present incumbent in the job, the loyal Lord Napier, is, I gather, likely to extend his period in office until the Princess is back splashing in the pool. "He will not leave the Princess during a time of difficulty," says a highly supportive skirt at Buckingham Palace.

JOHN MAJOR is to give his first big interview since June, on Breakfast with Frost, prompted by Norma — a fan of Sir David.

Cresta tester

THESE are tense times for Lady Brabazon of Tara. She is launching herself down the Cresta Run in St Moritz this Sunday — the only day when women can brave the toboggan's 80mph nemesis. "Your thighs need to be very strong," she tells me. "Its inevitable one is going to fall out — but I don't bounce anymore." The Cresta, which has claimed three deaths, restricted women in 1925 because it might "cause breast cancer". The run has just been graced by Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent and Rory Bremner, without a crash.

JOHN MAJOR is to give his first big interview since June, on Breakfast with Frost, prompted by Norma — a fan of Sir David.

Bottom line

FINDING myself at London Fashion Week yesterday, I received alarming reports from the ladies' cloakroom. Among those encountered: Jerry Hall, carrying her bawling infant son. Eager to introduce him to the joys of self-appraisal, Jerry held him by the



Frock shock: Yasmin Le Bon

mirror. The tears ceased. Next was Yasmin Le Bon, sporting a transparent frock for the Bella Freud show. "I simply can't wear this," she said. "My bum's far too wobbly." Any reassurances went unheeded: she appeared on the catwalk trying to hide her derriere, behind another model.

JASPER GERARD



ASH WEDNESDAY

'Render your hearts and not your garments' Joel, 2, 13

Fasting, repentance, discipline, asceticism — the associations of Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, are not popular. They conjure up a kill-joy religion, an oppressive Puritanism cramping the human spirit, and the condemnation of legitimate pleasures. We know too much of the destructive effects of guilt-inducing preaching and an image of a God of ferocious judgment and insatiable moral demand — a God who seems to be more about fettering than freedom. We may also note the irony that in our secular world dieting comes in where religious fasting goes out, and counselling and therapy burgeon where men and women avoid confession of sin and the acknowledgement of their need for forgiveness.

The truth is that a sentimental religion of constant sunshine has no cutting edge. It fails to speak to the reality of the human condition, and the reality is the sharp, dark, and often testing reality of sin, pain, evil and death — the "time of trial" or "temptation" from which the Lord's Prayer prays that we may be delivered. The easy optimism, whether of Enlightenment rationalism or 19th-century faith in progress, faltered in the face of the human capacity for evil. In the Christian tradition, the human reality is a flawed reality. We neither see clearly what the good is, nor do we have the strength to do it having seen it. Knowledge, as Newman reminded us, "has no tendency to mend the heart". And the heart of Scripture is not the place of feeling, but of willing and choosing (of which indeed feeling may be part), and the human condition is of a flawed will.

Martin Luther wrote in a powerful phrase "that it is the love of the heart that makes both God and idol". We make God in our own image, and become enslaved to power and passion and possessiveness. Sin is that distortion, missing the mark of what is good, of the God who made us for himself and in

whom alone is our healing and our whole-ness. It was St Augustine, long before Sigmund Freud, who perceived that human sin is a consequence of disordered and mis-directed loving. The remedy was not ceasing to love — to do that would be to become a block of wood, a dead thing, the ice-bound in the abyss of hell — but to set our love in order. And that order is defined by the two great commandments that Jesus gave: the love of God — who is perfect love — with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, and the love of our neighbour as ourselves.

But the ordering of love is not something we can do in our own strength. Only by grace, the reaching out to us of an enabling love in which we are loved before we are even capable of loving — a love which loves us as we are and for what we may become — may we be so ordered.

It is in the context of that grace and love, seen in the cross of Christ to which Lent leads, that repentance and fasting and self-denial find their meaning. It is by grace that we are saved. When we know that, we find that the ascetic disciplines of the spiritual life are not negative, but are ways to train and develop the spirit. Asceticism is only a technical word for "training". We deceive ourselves if we deny that training and practice are needed as much by those who would grow in the love of God, and so in being truly human, as by those who would become skilled in sport or music. Thus Lent is indeed a springtime, as the old English root of the word reminds us, not only because Lent and spring coincide, but because the discipline of Lent is about that penitence which subverts pride and easy optimism, and enables the flowering of the fruits of the Spirit. It is in learning this that we discover the paradoxical truth in George Herbert's Ash Wednesday greeting of penitence and fasting — Welcome dear feast of Lent!

THE ENGLISH PROBLEM

Hague should blend the old and new in constitutional reform

Conservatism, Benjamin Disraeli once observed, was about resistance to change followed by the swift adaption to and adoption of it. This is a lesson that William Hague is willing to learn. In his lecture to the Centre for Policy Studies last night, Mr Hague did not offer a blueprint of his own. He made it clear, however, that Conservatives could neither ignore the set of proposals that the Government has initiated nor pretend that they could be eliminated. The issue is not whether reform is worthwhile but what can be made of it.

The most compelling criticism of Labour's constitutional agenda is that it is piecemeal and only partly thought through. The Scottish parliament has been designed without consideration for its impact on the rest of the country. The numerous serious difficulties related to the Human Rights Bill have only begun to be discovered. The Government has, rightly, backed an elected mayor for London but also retained a strong assembly. The reconstruction of the House of Lords has not been properly linked to an overdue reform of the House of Commons.

This should be the Conservative opportunity. Mr Hague cannot exploit it if his party is determined to defend every aspect of the status quo and unwilling to enter a debate on the constitution. His speech was intended to signal his pursuit of options compatible with his party's principles but relevant to contemporary politics. The Tories need, as he acknowledged, their "own programme of constitutional reform". They should also recognise, as Mr Hague bluntly did, that there were times during their prolonged period in power that they "rejected even evolutionary change". The foundations have been laid for a more imaginative approach.

The most important question concerns what might be described as the English problem. Scotland will have its own parliament, Wales an assembly, and Northern Ireland something similar. England is the obvious omission. It is unrealistic to imagine that this might be a permanent solution. Mr Hague offered four possible answers: the creation of an English parliament, the introduction of a two-tier Westminster Parliament — with an English assembly operating within a British House of Commons, a proportionate cut of Scottish MPs or the revitalisation of English local government. This is certainly the short-list that Conservatives should contemplate.

An English parliament, though, is unattractive. A federal system where one unit, England, contains over 80 per cent of the population would not be sustainable. It would only serve as an interim measure before the final fracture of the United Kingdom. The idea of a two-tier Parliament is seductive but unsustainable. The prospect of a Government with a majority on British issues but not English ones is a recipe for conflict. A reduction in Scottish representation would be commendably simple but could not in itself provide the solution.

The local route is that which is most practical and completely compatible with traditional Conservative principles. Decentralisation within the current structure of local government offers limited promise. Mr Hague should instead embrace the idea of really powerful elected executive mayors — with councils serving solely as subsidiary scrutinising institutions — as his answer to the English problem. This would be a proper Tory response: something old, something new, something even borrowed and blue.

BRITAIN'S XANADU

The Pleasure Dome will happen; it had better be good

Attacking the Millennium Dome is Britain's favourite sport. Some complain that it is an abuse of public money that could have been better spent elsewhere. Others have protested that there is nothing to put inside it. After yesterday's unveiling of much of the dome's contents, no one can claim that the structure will be an empty shell. It is time to stop inventing better uses for the money.

Maybe the public would have preferred the money to have been spent on schools and hospitals: that, however, would have ripped to shreds the notion that lottery spending should not do the work that the Treasury is supposed to do. Perhaps the dome should have been built outside London — but it would have been extraordinary to site the dome anywhere other than at the home of time. These arguments, though, can now be put behind us. The dome is happening and there is no point in wishing otherwise. Criticism would be best kept to ensuring that what is built really is the best of Britain.

With luck, it should be a huge success. If — and it is a big if — the infrastructure works smoothly and London can cope with the huge influx of tourists, then the Millennium Dome could become a focus of great pride and excitement. With so much money at their disposal, the organisers have no excuse not to produce a stunning show — they deserve to lose their heads if the millennium "experience" is not exceptional.

It is easy to see why ministers are now calling for the nation to unite behind their venture. But blind optimism could be as

harmful as unthinking cynicism. The latter is a lazy response to a visionary idea. The former could encourage complacency and bad management. What is needed now is a sceptical eye on the project to ensure that the exhibits, the transport and the organisation of the dome are as excellent as they need to be to justify the huge sums of lottery money that is being pumped into them. The Opposition should avoid the temptation to stoke this kind of cynicism. This may obstruct attempts to win the necessary extra sponsorship. The Conservatives' negativity sits ill with a party that first conceived the dome and which has a representative, Michael Heseltine, enthusiastically helping to run it.

But, while Peter Mandelson is in day-to-day command, the Opposition's opposition is understandable. Allowing the master of spin to mastermind the dome was always going to rouse the suspicion that Labour planned to exploit the millennium for political purposes. An election campaign in 2001 fought on the back of an exuberant millennial year could reap ample rewards in return for the undoubted risk that Labour has taken.

Clearly politicians cannot and should not divorce themselves entirely from a project of this scale. But, if Mr Mandelson wants support from the Tories, he could now stand back from the detailed planning. And if he is indeed to be given a Cabinet job in the next reshuffle, Tony Blair should perhaps look for a less partisan politician to continue the work that his lieutenant has started.

'Enlightenment' in Irvine's choice

From Mr Dugald Barr

Sir, Though Magnus Linklater (possibly swayed by his other job as chairman of the Scottish Arts Council) assesses Lord Irvine of Lairg's choice of pictures purely in terms of aesthetic criteria ("Grand but safe..."), February 21) they have surely been chosen first of all for their subject matter.

While there are some landscapes (mostly late 19th and early 20th century) and a group of about a dozen 17th-century Dutch portraits, by far the largest category is a group of over 30 portraits of members of the Scottish Enlightenment. Several of the more prominent indeed are represented twice, including Adam Smith, David Hume, Allan Ramsay, Sir Walter Scott and the ennobled judge Lord Armstrong.

It may reasonably be assumed that, in bringing these particular paintings out of the cellars of the National Gallery of Scotland and assembling them in one place, the Lord Chancellor aims to make the achievements of the Scotsmen of that brilliant period — without parallel before the advent of the present Government — accessible to a wider public.

For this he deserves much praise, not criticism. It is excellent that London's inhabitants and visitors alike will have the opportunity to visit what will amount to a small but significant new museum — and all without a penny of lottery money being spent.

Of course, the Scottish Parliament may shortly demand their return, but let's not worry about that now.

Yours faithfully,

DUGALD BARR,
1 Canning Place, W8 5AD,
February 21.

From Mr David Wilding

Sir, As a lay magistrate having to come to terms with the increasing financial constraints placed on magistrates' courts committees, I find the actions of the Lord Chancellor to be hypocritical.

At grassroots level we are facing reductions in qualified personnel and numbers of courthouses, and pressures to speed up dealing with cases. On the other hand we see the lavish expenditure on the Lord Chancellor's apartments and now the proposal to hire further staff at a cost of £2.5 million (report, February 23).

The Government tries to justify the cost of the refurbishments by saying that 10 Downing Street is "too modest" for official functions. I would suggest it has served this country well and will continue to do so for many years.

I agree with William Rees-Mogg ("Never judge a man by his wallpaper", February 23) that Lord Chancellors should be judged by how they guard the traditions of liberty under the law, but the public perception of the current Lord Chancellor's actions is that his stately style and empire-building are at variance with what is being required of the magistracy and other public services.

This Government seems to me to be doing everything that it condemned in the previous administration.

Yours faithfully,

DAVID WILDING,
Nailford House, Brewery Lane,
Bridge, nr Canterbury, Kent CT4 5LF,
February 23.

From Lord Thomson of Monifeith

Sir, As someone who is proud that two successive Lord Chancellors of high distinction should be Scots I am puzzled that the present holder of the office, Lord Irvine, should be persecuted for the crime of bringing some notable Scottish paintings out of their Edinburgh cellar and enabling visitors from all over the world to admire them in the Lord Chancellor's chambers in the Palace of Westminster.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE THOMSON,
House of Lords,
February 23.

From Mr Maynard Hall

Sir, It seems to me that Lord Irvine, in being censured for availing himself of the chance to borrow pictures from the national art collections, is to be congratulated.

As one who is convinced of the value of great art in advancing civilisation, I should make it compulsory for all ministers of the Crown to have at least 30 pictures from the collections, and to attend art appreciation classes.

Yours faithfully,

MAYNARD HALL,
Beach House, Curthwaite,
Wigton, Cumbria CA7 8BG,
February 23.

From Mr Gregor Macaulay

Sir, As Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine is already Keeper of the Queen's Conscience. In the interests of economy, could he not also be appointed Keeper of the Queen's Pictures?

Yours faithfully,

G. A. MACAULAY,
8a Balmoral Street,
Dunedin, New Zealand,
gregor.macaulay@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
February 23.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

What to read into NHS waiting lists

From Mr Geoffrey Hulme

Sir, Labour's commitment to reduce waiting lists by putting in more resources (report and leading article, February 20) was rather like offering to reduce road congestion in London by building more roads. The better the roads, the more people travel; the better the hospital service, the more patients are referred to hospital. Congestion and waiting lists do not necessarily come down.

It may be that if we spent on health as much as, say, France the backlog of hidden demand would be met and waiting lists would come down, but we are a long way from that.

In the short run, government needs to show separately the numbers coming off waiting lists and the numbers being put on them. It is the reduction in the former that matters and reflects the nub of their commitment. It does not matter, and may indeed be a good sign, if the latter exceeds it and waiting lists rise (provided waiting times for a given condition come down).

Yours faithfully,

GEOFFREY HULME
(Principal Finance Officer,
DHSS, 198-86),
163a Kennington Park Road, SE11 4JJ,
February 21.

From Mr Terry Williams

Sir, Frank Dobson's self-flagellation in accepting the blame for waiting lists rises confirms that this Government, like the last one, is failing to realise that there are fatal flaws in the way statistics are calculated.

Patients are counted as "waiting" from the moment they are assigned a hospital appointment, regardless of the interval between notification and the appointment date. Depending on the reporting date, this could be as little as a day or as long as a year.

Allocating more consultants or hospital beds increases the opportunities for treatment. These are instantly taken up by expansion of demand.

One solution would be to base statistics on the number of patients not being seen inside Patients' Charter ob-

jectives for their particular treatment. This would also make possible league tables on National Health trust and area health authority performances.

In the NHS generally more and more patients are being treated more effectively in a shorter time. No one would want to pretend that the situation was perfect, but most objective observers would recognise that increased resources, allied to improved methods and management, are having a noticeable effect on patient care.

Yours faithfully,

TERRY WILLIAMS
(Non-executive director, Havering National Health Service Trust),
Jandora, Victoria Avenue,
Langdon Hills, Essex SS16 5NT,
February 20.

From Mr R. J. Aitken

Sir, One cause for the increasing NHS waiting lists that has received insufficient attention is the effect of recent changes to the training of junior surgeons. The reduction in doctors' hours and the shortened training period have reduced overall surgical training by 60 per cent. As a consequence junior surgeons have to be more closely supervised by their consultants, who in turn have to drop other commitments.

They are cancelling non-urgent operations and clinics when on call. As consultants typically work a one-in-four emergency rota the resultant drop in their elective activity is substantial.

The full effect of this reduced training on waiting lists may not become evident for some years. It will undoubtedly be exacerbated if, as many expect, established consultants have to support their newly appointed colleagues who are not sufficiently experienced for fully independent practice.

Yours sincerely,

R. J. AITKEN
(Consultant surgeon),
Department of Surgery,
Eastern General Hospital,
Seafield Street, Edinburgh EH6 7LN,
February 19.

Russia and Nato

From the Director of The Atlantic Council

Sir, Hugh Hanning (letter, February 18) expresses his continued opposition to the expansion of Nato. He is entitled to his personal opinion, but it is not shared by The Atlantic Council, which remains fully committed to Nato enlargement as agreed at the Madrid summit, subject, of course, to ratification by member states.

Moreover, I cannot accept that the Russian attitude to Nato's modest and prudent enlargement process has been in any way responsible for President Yeltsin's policy towards Iraq over the question of the role of the UN in-pectorate.

There is no real evidence that Russian policy towards the politics of the Middle East has been fashioned by an intention to oppose Western interests arising from Nato's projected enlargement. Russia shares a joint strategic interest with the West in containing and, if necessary, deterring "pariah" states bent on acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Were Russian policy to be otherwise, then the ability of the UN Security Council to shape a constructive policy to the missile threat from Iraq would be in ruins and Russia itself would become vulnerable to the charge that it had fallen into the old habit of putting narrow self-interest above the requirements of international security.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN LEE WILLIAMS,
Director, The Atlantic Council,
Atlantic House,
8a Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN,
February 18.

Britain and EMU

From Mr Kenneth Reynolds

Sir, Matthew Parris must understand that what's eating the "elderly women with sour lips" he encountered at Referendum Party functions (article, February 20) is the fear that if Britain enters the EMU, which Helmut Kohl advocates, it will mean the surrender of all control over fiscal and social policies. In effect Britain will become a province of an undemocratic European Union dominated by Germany.

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH REYNOLDS,
Kembley, 34 Clarendon Way,
Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6RF,
February 20.

Millennium bug

From Mr Andrew Hubbard

Sir, There is surely a more fundamental problem with Mr Michael Wilson's washing machine (letters, February 20) than that identified by Mr Adrian Palmer in your column this morning.

Surely no self-respecting washing machine which thinks that it is in the year 1900 would permit a mere man to do the washing — on a Monday or otherwise.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW HUBBARD,
41 Dovecote Lane,
Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1HR,
February 23.

House surveys

From the Chief Executive of the Architects and Surveyors Institute

Sir, One of the country's leading mortgage lenders, Bristol & West, has recently announced its intention to stop commissioning surveys to establish the values of properties on which the company considers lending money, and other lenders are expected to follow suit.

Commenting on this move, the Consumer Affairs Minister, Nigel Griffiths, is reported as saying that their vast resources and detailed local knowledge, lenders are in a position to price properties without needing individual surveys.

That mortgage valuations are of limited use in establishing the actual condition of a property is a fact lost to most buyers. Having paid for the lenders' survey, they feel that they are being advanced money on the property's worth — rather than on its value to a lender in terms of the security of his investment.

This institute has long advised buyers of the need for a building survey, an investigation and assessment of the construction and condition of a building which is of the utmost importance to a potential homebuyer in terms of the security of his investment.

Commissioning such a survey may well turn out to be the best investment a buyer could make.

Yours faithfully,
IAN N. NORRIS,
Chief Executive,
Architects and Surveyors Institute,
15 St Mary Street,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 3WD,
asins@aol.com
February 16.

Population control

From Dr Rosemary Kirkman

Sir, Your Diary story today about £20,000 being spent by the Department for International Development on a gender sensitisation workshop in Swaziland shows most clearly why such a thing is needed.

The only reason for having many wives (as distinct from many mistresses), is to produce many legitimate children. In a country where a woman's status is dependent upon how many children she can produce, it is a waste of time sending in contraceptives and family planning workers, even though we know that in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa the infrastructure cannot provide enough food, education or healthcare for each woman to have four, five or more children.

Only when the leaders of the country appreciate that these measures of a man's worth are inappropriate to the modern age — and that women do have other functions than childbearing — will population control policies and the consequent reduction in environmental degradation begin to be taken seriously.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. E. KIRKMAN
(Senior Lecturer in Family Planning),
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Reproductive Health Care,
University of Manchester,
63-65 Palatine Road, M20 3JJ,
February 20.

Paying your way in a taxing system

From Mr Nicolas Owen

Sir, The tax gurus protest too much (letter, February 19). Taxpayers submitting returns by September 30 had their tax calculated for them. If they missed this deadline they had three months to do it themselves or employ an adviser to do it for them.

Anyone who could not do this should pay the penalty. Any adviser who could not do it should pick up the penalty. This is the only politically correct way to reduce the appalling amount of taxpayers' money spent on collecting tax.

A better way would be to abolish income tax and switch to a consumption-based tax system. But then without the taxation industry what would Sir Humphrey do for a second career?

Yours faithfully,

NICOLAS OWEN,
1 Beech Grove,
Orpington, Kent BR6 0HF,
n.owen@mccmail.com
February 19.

From Dr Gwyneth R. Daniel

Sir, I thought this administration had committed itself to reducing the bureaucratic burden.

I pay voluntary national insurance contributions by direct debit and my investment income is taxed at source. I earned £470 in the year 1996-97. This year the Inland Revenue sent me (using two envelopes) five forms, whether to read or to fill in. In the previous year, one form did the trick and even that was unnecessarily complicated.

A simple one-sheet form, an exemption declaration, to be picked up from post offices in advance of the main mailing would short-circuit the squandering of resources and leave people like me less tempted to join the black economy.

Yours etc,

G. R. DANIEL,
107 Paultney Road,
Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3JJ,
gwyneth.daniel@lineone.net
February 19.

From Mr John Clargo

Sir, The Presidents of the Chartered Institute of Taxation and of the Association of Taxation Technicians claim in their letter today that "the tax advisers who worked every evening and weekend since Christmas to ensure their clients' returns met the deadline deserve great credit".

No doubt they will receive such credit shortly after the presentation of their no doubt modest bills to their clients.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CLARGO
(Barrister-at-law),
Hardwick Building, New Square,
Lincoln's Inn, WC2A 3SB,
February 19.

Australian vote

From Sir Brian Barber

Sir, The Australian Constitutional Convention has voted for a referendum on whether the country should in future have its own head of state, instead of sharing one with a dozen or so other countries. To report this as a vote for "a referendum on whether to sever formal ties with Britain" (February 14), under the headline "Australia to vote on split from Britain", reveals a sad case of national under-confidence.

Britain and Australia have many more ties than the historical accident of sharing a head of state.

Yours sincerely,
BRIAN BARBER
(British High Commissioner
to Australia, 1991-04),
10 Melrose Road, SW18 1NE,
brianbarber@compuserve.com
February 15.

Collision course

From Mr J. G. Thomason

Sir, I recall the late Professor Philip Brockbank telling me that, though he had piloted several types of aircraft in the Far East during the war, he had never learned how to drive.

Arriving in Reading to take up a post in the Department of English at the university, he decided it was time to take driving lessons. He recounted how on his first lesson, when the car in front of him braked suddenly, he instinctively pulled hard on the steering column (letters, February 7, 12, 16, 19, 21).

Yours faithfully,
GORDON THOMASON,
Aveyron,
Windmill Lane,
Midgham Green, Reading RG7 5TY,
February 22.

Bumping along

From Mr Patrick Howarth

Sir, The captain of boats at Trinity College, Cambridge, who has described rowing as "a very people-oriented sport" (report, "Dons stick an oar into Bumps", February 20) is, you inform us, named Matthew Arnold.

There was once an Oxford man of that name who wrote of "days when wis were fresh and clear, and life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames" (*The Scholar-Gipsy*).

Ah well, lost causes.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK HOWARTH,
Flat 2, Pencarrow, The Avenue,
Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AJ,
February 20.

OBITUARIES

THE RIGHT REV GORDON WHEELER

The Right Rev Gordon Wheeler, Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, 1966-85, died on February 20 aged 87. He was born in Yorkshire on May 5, 1910.

An urbane and effective diocesan bishop for almost two decades, Gordon Wheeler was not only an able administrator but a man of deep culture, with a wide intellectual grasp. He was a liturgical and theological conservative who nevertheless could see the need for intelligent innovation in the Church and he gave a sensitive lead in the implementation in England of the reforms which followed the Second Vatican Council.

Through all his years as a prelate, he never lost the common touch. He particularly liked to entertain, and always kept a good table. Christmas Day was special for him as on that day he made a habit of being joined in his episcopal dining room by a collection of tramps. He showed the same humanity on less high days. After the formality of parish visitations, he would usually make straight for the piano in the church hall. The audience would call out the titles of popular songs, he would play and everybody would sing.

He had the Yorkshireman's initiative for getting things done. Appointed administrator at Westminster Cathedral in 1954, he found the walls gaunt and forbidding — the decoration for them that the architect, J. F. Bentley, had wanted had never been carried out. It was a question of money, and the vastness of the edifice had daunted a succession of his predecessors. Those difficulties did not daunt Wheeler. It was he who started the process of transforming the interior by the painting of the mosaics that grace the cathedral today.

After the Second Vatican Council Wheeler was made chairman of the Liturgical Commission for England and Wales. This meant he was the key person in deciding how the controversial changes from Latin to English in the liturgy should be introduced across the country. It was a task not entirely to his taste, since he was by inclination a traditionalist. But with a mixture of tact and charm he saw to it that the changes were made without too much disruption.

He was fortunate to have spent two



years in Rome attending the last sessions of the Vatican Council. At the council he spoke forcefully for more consideration for conscientious objectors. He also spoke out against nuclear weapons and contributed to the document that became *The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the World Today*.

In Rome he made the acquaintance of one of the stars of the council. This was the German Jesuit Cardinal Bea, who was the first head of the Pope's Secretariat on Christian Unity, treating it with a creative freshness. Years later, when the two men met again, Wheeler showed Bea the motto he had chosen as a bishop, *Veritas et Caritas*. Bea was moved by the choice and commended it, saying: "Truth without love can be intolerable and love without truth is no more than sentimentality."

Bishop Wheeler was the first Roman

Catholic bishop in the country to set up a diocesan council, a consultative body of laity. He knew instinctively that the many changes set in train by Vatican II would need a new and permanent study centre. This was established at Wood Hall near Wetherby and was the first in the country. Later, when the Vietnamese refugees started to arrive and had no place to go, he put some of the families up there.

William Gordon Wheeler was born to a Yorkshire couple — his father was in the wool business. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School and University College, Oxford, where he won an Exhibition to read history. Brought up in the Church of England, he later studied for the Anglican ministry at St Stephen's House, Oxford, and was ordained at Derby Cathedral in 1934.

After serving as a curate in Brighton and Chesterfield, he became assistant

chaplain at the High Church Lansing College in Sussex. In 1936, however, after taking instruction at Downside Abbey in Somerset, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church, to which he had long been drawn. After study at the Beda College in Rome, a place for late vocations, he was ordained in the crypt of Westminster Cathedral in 1940.

He spent four years as an assistant priest in Lower Edmonton, North London, before being appointed as one of the chaplains to Westminster Cathedral, where his duties included editing the *Westminster Cathedral Gazette*. From 1950 to 1954 he served as chaplain to the Catholic students of London University, then returned to the cathedral in the post of administrator, which he was to hold for the next ten years.

It was obvious to those who knew him, however, that Wheeler was destined at some stage to be a bishop. In 1964 he was ordained coadjutor Bishop of Middlesbrough with the right to succeed to an elderly incumbent. He was driven from London to his new post by a monk who happened to be returning to Ampleforth Abbey. The monk was Dom Basil Hume, now the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, whose surprise appointment in 1976 was to block any hopes Wheeler's friends may have had of his being translated.

In fact, Wheeler did not succeed to Middlesbrough, but instead became Bishop of the more important Catholic see of Leeds, to which he was appointed when it suddenly fell vacant in 1966. For the next 19 years Wheeler battled with the problems of a large and challenging diocese. It was a time when a great many Catholic families were moving out of city centres to live in villages or in the countryside, vacating the homes their forebears had occupied often for a hundred years or more. This migration of the faithful called for a great many new churches and changes in diocesan boundaries as well. At one stage Bishop Wheeler had to move 50 of his own old parishes into the new diocese of Hallam.

In 1985 he retired to the Convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor at Headingley, Leeds. Until he became too ill, his time was spent reading the novels of Trollope and Dickens, works he had never got round to as an active bishop. He is survived by his sister.

LADY KESWICK

Lady Keswick, philanthropist and widow of Sir John Keswick, died on February 17 at Portrack, Dumfriesshire, aged 93. She was born in London on January 13, 1905.

FOR five years early in the 1950s Clare Keswick was consort to John Keswick, then the rajah of Jardine Matheson in Hong Kong. They were hectic years as during them the fortunes of the company were re-established and the foundations were laid for the emergence of Hong Kong as the natural successor to Shanghai (by then firmly under the control of the Communists). It was a period in which Clare always stayed well behind the scenes — playing little or no part in the business or political life of her husband — but her gracious and unswerving moral presence was acknowledged by his always referring to her in private as "Authority".

Clare Elwes, as she was before her marriage, grew up in Billing, Northamptonshire, in a large, happy and very Catholic family, an environment which gave her the faith that was to be the backbone of her life. The youngest of eight children, she, her sister and six brothers led a charmed life, suffused with music and country pleasures. It centered upon her parents, the tenor Gervase Elwes and her mother, the redoubtable Lady Winifred. This idyllic childhood helped to forge her confident, generous and optimistic character. She loved to act, and from an early age, to captivate an audience with stories of wry social situations ironically observed. These were later translated into brilliant letters and, had she wanted, she might have been a writer in the Mitford mould. Her gift of mimicry and infectious sense of humour were legendary and sometimes came to her aid in tricky social situations. In 1940 — at the slightly



advanced age of 35 — she married John Keswick in Westminster Cathedral but, as she liked to tell the story, the marriage was not recognised at Somerset House because of the order of her many Christian names on the marriage certificate — Clare Mary Alice Cynthia Catherine Cecilia — with Jardines at the very centre of affairs — was being transformed from a colonial outpost into the capital of Far Eastern trade that it has remained.

John Keswick was instrumental then, and later as president of the Sino-British Trade Council, in changing British relationships from those of an imperial power to those of a major trading partner with the Chinese. By furthering cultural exchanges, and many personal friendships, she overcame Western stereotypes against the Chinese and helped its latest reopening. He was appointed KCMG in 1972. Clare Keswick's very full life of 93 years was touched three times by tragedy: first, on the day before her 16th birthday, when her father, Gervase Elwes, then on a singing tour in Boston, was killed in an accident; secondly, in 1982, when her husband John died in another accident; and, lastly, in 1995 when her only child, Maggie, succumbed to cancer. Despite these traumatic personal losses, she never lost her sense of humour or zest for meeting new people or telling a good story.

The last 15 years of her life were spent, mostly as the first 15 had been, with her at the centre of a vital, loving, communal home life. During this period she also devoted effort to family trusts, the Hollywood Trust which aids the youth of Dumfries and Galloway, and Maggie's Centre in Edinburgh, set up by her daughter to help fellow cancer-sufferers to help themselves.

She is survived by her son-in-law, Charles Jencks, and by two grandchildren, John Keswick Jencks and Lily Clare Jencks.

PROFESSOR VERNA WRIGHT

Professor Verna Wright, consultant physician and evangelical preacher, died of cancer on January 31 aged 69. He was born on December 31, 1928.

THE development of the internationally recognised centre for research and treatment of rheumatism and arthritis in Leeds is almost entirely due to Professor Verna Wright, Leeds University was one of the earliest institutions to search for treatments for the

chronic pain and disability associated with those diseases. In the 1930s Professor Hartfall had pioneered, in the United Kingdom, the use of intramuscular gold in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

Verna Wright became his research assistant in 1956, and on Hartfall's retirement he was appointed consultant physician at the Leeds General Infirmary and senior lecturer in the department of medicine. Under his guidance, rheumatological services developed rapidly.

At first, he worked virtually alone in establishing a rheumatology and rehabilitation unit, operating from a small Victorian house. By 1971 the unit had attracted so many young medical researchers that it was bursting at the seams and had to be expanded. Today it has more than 30 researchers and many international connections.

Verna Wright was given a personal chair in 1970, and became the first occupant of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council Chair. The greatest of

his medical contributions was probably the formulation of the idea of a cohesive group of inflammatory arthritic diseases, the seronegative arthropathies. Awareness was growing among international researchers that there was a high proportion of brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents among patients affected with psoriasis, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease or back-pain. The Leeds group suggested there was a common genetic

component to all these, and this was later proved with the advent of tissue-typing. Research worldwide continues to rely on this understanding.

Verna Wright was born in Devonport. His father, a Royal Navy physical training instructor, died of pneumonia when Verna was six. With his mother and younger sister and brother, he moved to Bedford. He said the most significant moment in his life came when, as an 18-year-old, he came into contact with an interdenominational Christian youth organisation, known as Young Life. It was the start of his life as an evangelical preacher, during which he was involved with many Christian organisations.

He left Bedford School with a state scholarship and a place at the veterinary school at Liverpool University. After his first year, he persuaded a reluctant academic authority to let him switch to medicine.

As a medical student in 1953 he co-founded United Beach Missions, which engaged in family activities on the beaches of England and Wales, with the object of sharing the Christian message.

Under his chairmanship, the organisation grew from one team at Llandudno, 45 years ago, to 35 centres with more than a thousand team members operating in England, Wales, Ireland, France and Belgium. Wright was also a president of the Creation and Science movement, lecturing regularly in support of the creationism as recorded in Genesis, pointing to man's unique physical, mental and spiritual dimension.

He married Esther Margaret Brown in 1952. She survives him, together with five sons and four daughters.

PETER LONGBOTTOM

Peter Longbottom, international cyclist, died in a road accident on February 10 aged 38. He was born on May 13, 1959.

THE death of Peter Longbottom in a road accident while riding to meet fellow cyclists for a training ride has robbed Britain of one of its most experienced competitors. Last year, after an outstanding career of 18 years, he retired from serious racing to become the mentor of younger, promising riders.

His career was based on the belief that, to succeed, one had always to enjoy riding a bike. That, he contended, would reduce the pain of effort and the boredom of lonely training sessions, and also ease the disappointment of being beaten.

Longbottom knew all about punishing his body to overcome greater pain barriers and resisting the temptation to miss a daily training stint when North Yorkshire's weather was at its most unwelcoming. It was that rugged dedication that provided him with the rewards of success.

In 1977 he was selected for Britain's team in the world junior road race championship. Medals were quick to come and when Longbottom retired his proudest possessions were the 44 Commonwealth Games and British championship medals that he had won in road races, time trials and record attempts. He was on the threshold of reaching veteran status (age 40) and it was inconceivable that he would not have achieved his ambition to raise his personal medal count to his private target of 50.

Longbottom gained the respect of his peers not only for his achievements but also for



the background to those successes. Until two years ago he worked as a civil engineer for Ryedale District Council at Malton, but somehow managed to find time for a punishing training regime and racing programme that took him around the world.

Early in his cycling career Longbottom had caught the eye of the AC Boulogne-mer, a renowned French "nursery" for up-and-coming riders. He spent 12 months with the club, did well, and was beckoned by a professional career on the Continent. But Longbottom finally decided that such a structured style of life was not for him. He had been, and always remained, his own man, ready to praise the achievements of others, yet equally quick with Yorkshire bluntness, to be critical. His job in England had been kept open for him while he was in France, and at the end of 1982 he returned home, declining another year with his French sponsors.

Race and enjoy himself he

benefiting from his period abroad and able to use his tactical experience to become one of Britain's dominant riders, but he was also always prepared to ride his heart out to assist a team colleague. Among those to gain from that unselfish streak was Chris Boardman when the two became members of the then all-powerful Manchester Wheelers.

The dream of a young man came true for Longbottom when he won the opening stage of the 1989 Milk Race from a mass pack of 100 riders; he had one his home-work and studied the tricky downhill run-in to the finish at Bournemouth. His winning effort came 300 metres from the line. No one could match it. The event was one of the ten Milk Races in which he competed, another record in itself. Longbottom blossomed as a time trialist in 1990 when he broke the British 25-miles record that had stood to the legendary Alf Engers for 12 years. Then 31, Longbottom clocked 49 minutes 13 seconds, an improvement of 11 seconds on Engers's record.

He continued his winning streak three days later when, although considered an outsider, he won his first national title in the 100 miles time trial championship by four minutes in three hours 51 minutes 25 seconds. That year he also took four minutes off 50 miles record with a time of one hour 30 minutes 14 seconds, an average speed of 33mph.

Longbottom's interest in the sport never waned; this month he had agreed to coach riders at a training camp in Majorca and to continue as manager of the elite North Wirral Velo club.

He is survived by his wife Lyn. They had no children.

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"PRINCE OF SCOTLAND" ON THIS DAY February 25, 1925

SCOTTISH SUPPORT FOR REVIVED TITLE (FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT) EDINBURGH, Feb 24. The proposal to revive the old title "Prince of Scotland" as belonging of right to the Prince of Wales as the eldest son of the King (which was the subject of an article by Dr Walter Seton in The Times of Saturday) has aroused much interest in Scotland, and its adoption would undoubtedly be hailed with gratification by the Scottish people. The authenticity of the old Scottish title of the Heir-Apparent has been established, and its use when the Prince visits Scotland would be regarded as an appropriate recognition of the ancient rights and privileges of Scotland. The Prince will receive the degree of Doctor of Laws from Edinburgh University this year, and it is felt that this would be a happy occasion for the restoration of the old title.

ON THIS DAY February 25, 1925

With the current transformation of the Scottish situation it seems bizarre that proposal 70 years ago, to revive the old title "Prince of Scotland" as belonging of right to the eldest son of the King, was so favourably received. appreciated by the Scottish people and would add to the already intense loyalty and affection with which Scotland regards the Prince. The St. Andrew Society, whose main purpose is to preserve Scottish tradition, is naturally enthusiastic for the resumption of the title. Mr W.S. Farmer, the Secretary of the Society in Edinburgh, says: "We are wholeheartedly in favour of the proposal. Indeed, the Society has long agitated for the restoration of the title, and when we had occasion to make any representation to his Royal Highness we made a point of using the title 'Prince of Scotland'."

GLASGOW, Feb. 24. Opinion in Glasgow is favourable towards the proposed revival of the ancient title "Prince of Scotland" for the Heir-Apparent to the Throne. Ex-Lord Provost Sir Thomas Paxton said that he did not see that the title could give any offence to anyone, and it would be a good thing to identify the prince more intimately with Scotland. There was a certain amount of association in the titles "Baron Renfrew" and "Duke of Rothesay," but "Prince of Scotland" would be very comprehensive. Mr Walter Buchanan, Chairman of the Council of St Andrew Society, Glasgow, said that the Society has already passed resolutions in favour of the title. They were entirely in agreement with Dr Seton's suggestion. The Society, having gone very fully into the whole question, was convinced that it was the Prince's right to have the title. It was a matter of historical continuity. At a gathering of sergents and serjeants of the London Scottish, held at their headquarters, Buckingham-gate, SW, on Saturday evening, the toast of "The Prince of Scotland" was drunk with enthusiasm.

NEWS

Princess Margaret suffers stroke

Princess Margaret was undergoing tests at a hospital in Barbados last night after suffering a mild stroke while on holiday in the Caribbean.

Irvine demanded refurbishment

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, personally intervened to demand the highest quality refurbishment of his official residence a month before the project was agreed by the House of Lords.

MCC 'no' to women

Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, said he would support legal action against the MCC after they decided not to admit women as members.

Hanged man cleared

A widow's campaign to clear the name of her husband ended in triumph yesterday, 46 years after he was hanged for the murder of a shopkeeper.

Camelot's Dome win

Tickets for the Millennium Exhibition will be sold from almost every street corner. Camelot, the National Lottery operator, won the job of ticket distributor for the Dome.

Cottages industry

In a new survey of house names in Britain, The Cottage has proved the hottest property address, leaving Dunroamin, Bella Vista and The Laurels streets behind.

Award for Jenkins

Simon Jenkins, The Times columnist, was yesterday awarded the Edgar Wallace Trophy annually by the London Press Club for writing of the highest quality.

UN hails Annan

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, received a euphoric welcome back to New York from UN staff after negotiating an accord on weapons inspections with Iraq.

IRA 'fixer' jailed

An IRA 'fixer' who helped terrorists launch three mortar attacks on Heathrow Airport was jailed for 20 years at Woolwich Crown Court.

Mossad head quits

Israel's leading spymaster, Danny Yatom, resigned as head of Mossad after the botched attempt last year to assassinate a Hamas leader in Jordan.

M&S libel claim

The name of Marks & Spencer was destroyed in a Granada documentary which alleged that it sold clothes made by child labour, a court heard.

Dolphin slaughter

A killer is preying on dolphins off the French Mediterranean coast. Corpses of the mammals are washing up daily with identical, inexplicable wounds.

Arise, Sir John Elton

The man who received his knighthood from the Queen for services to music was announced by Lord Camoys, the Lord Chamberlain, as Sir John Elton.

California pounded

Driven by El Niño, California's heaviest rains in a century have brought death, mud and chaos to a state better known for its endless summer.

Italians lay base for good pizza

Fed up to the back teeth with the stodgy travesties that pass for pizza in much of the world - including Italy itself - the Italian authorities yesterday laid down precise requirements for 'genuine pizza'.



Paul Smith, Britain's most successful menswear designer, speaking before unveiling his first women's wear catwalk show in London Fashion Week yesterday. The collection included clothes inspired by high society between 1890 and 1920.

BUSINESS

Merger: Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham caused an upset in the City after calling off their planned bid of £100 billion plus.

SPORT

Football: Brian Little resigned as manager of Aston Villa, the victim of his team's poor form in the Premier League and the FA Cup.

ARTS

Right old ding-dong: Inspired by Victor Hugo's tale of love and loss among the gargoyles in Paris, the Northern Ballet Theatre is presenting a new staging of The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

FEATURES

Monster hit: South Park is a hit series about four little monsters obsessed with bodily functions, dirty ditties and sacrilege. It is Beavis & Butthead meets the Teletubbies.

Safeway: The supermarket group issued its third profit warning in the space of a year.

Sailing: EF Language won the fifth stage of the Whitbread Round the World Race, finishing more than 360 miles ahead of her nearest rivals.

Screen heroes: Britain's exciting new breed of young film-makers are motivated by a maverick bravado that no lack of finance or training can diminish.

French leave: The number of British women marrying foreign men has doubled in the past decade.

Economy: The top American central banker said the US economy was finely balanced between the threats of deflation imported from Asia and inflation caused by low unemployment.

Rugby union: Irish rugby was thrown into disarray when Brian Ashton resigned as Ireland coach just 12 months into a six-year contract.

Songs of praise: As part of London's Byzantine Festival, St Paul's Cathedral is to host a concert that will unite two of the earliest Christian communities.

Nigella Lawson: Why I'm quitting town this weekend; missing the old 50p coin; bemoaning the takeover of Radio 4 panel games by new lad comics with mockney accents and boasting.

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 51.8 points to close at 5651.0. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 104.4 to 104.8 after a rise from \$1.6433 to \$1.6477 and from DM2.9563 to DM2.9663.

Cricket: West Indies abandoned their policy of including six fast bowlers when they named Dina Nath Ramnarine, a wrist spinner, in the squad for the fourth Test against England.

Jazz babes: New Orleans, the cradle of jazz, is still giving birth to some new talents, many of them on display in the city's Mardi Gras extravaganza.

Boom gloom: The increasing trend towards mergers of big banks and companies is causing insecurity among City big-spenders and the result is a slowing of the property boom in London.

Home alone: One of the most distinctive townhouses designed by Robert Adams is to be turned into a private members' club.

Despite the negotiated peace-saving deal with Iraq, there is limited cause to cheer. Peace-making with Saddam has never been simple and the question of 'what next' remains a challenge to the Clinton Administration.

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Home alone: One of the most distinctive townhouses

THE TIMES

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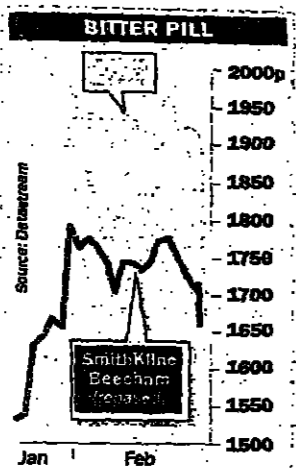
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25 1998

Failure of drug merger wipes £13bn off shares

Deal's collapse angers investors



By PAUL DURMAN

ANGRY City fund managers were yesterday blaming the loss of £13.5 billion on the size of two men's egos.

A breakdown in the relationship between Sir Richard Sykes, chairman of Glaxo Wellcome, and Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham, was believed to be at the heart of SB's decision to abandon a proposed £110 billion merger between the two pharmaceutical groups.

The collapse of month-long talks, news of which emerged late on Monday evening, prompted sharp falls in the

share prices of both companies yesterday, reducing their combined stock market value by £13.5 billion. Shares in Glaxo Wellcome fell 13 per cent, from £19.04 to £16.57, while SB fell 10 per cent, from 307p to 274p. Zeneca, the third big British drugs company, was also hit, contributing to a 51.8-point fall in the FTSE 100 index to 5,651.

Mercury Asset Management, which owns 4.6 per cent of SmithKline Beecham and 3.2 per cent of Glaxo Wellcome, is believed to be one of the biggest losers. Mercury, now part of Merrill Lynch, invested heavily in both

shares while they stood near their recent highs. In all, the value of its holdings fell by about £500 million, with a £50 million loss on the shares bought since the merger was first proposed.

Institutional investors expressed irritation and disbelief that the merger had fallen apart because of management disagreements. The prospect of benefits from the merger, including annual savings estimated at £1.5 billion a year, had previously seen large rises in the price of both companies.

One senior fund manager said it was "disgraceful" that management disputes had

scuttled a deal that promised huge rewards for their shareholders. He said: "It's a pretty sad state. Modern boards go on and on about returning value to shareholders and so on. But it was the board's interests that were uppermost in people's minds."

Graham Wood, head of UK equities at Standard Life, said: "It's sad that both sides are walking away from what looks like it was going to be a large amount of savings."

Stan Pearson at Scottish Widows said he was irritated and disappointed.

However, the Manufacturing Science Finance union

welcomed the collapse of the merger which was expected to lead to the loss of 10,000 jobs, 2,000 of them in the UK. The union said the proposal had been an exercise in corporate greed and the two companies had failed to demonstrate a merger would have delivered the promised benefits.

SB said it decided to end the merger talks when "insurmountable differences" emerged. SB spoke of differences in management philosophy and corporate culture, but it is thought the turning point was when Glaxo Wellcome decided it did not want to appoint Mr Leschly as chief executive

of the merged group, as had been agreed from the outset. Although neither side will give details, SB accused Glaxo Wellcome of renegeing on last month's announcement.

Institutional investors intend to press both groups to justify their decision in meetings, but feel they have little influence with such big companies because ownership is so widely spread.

Analysts see little hope of the deal being resurrected. A hostile bid from either is also thought difficult and unlikely.

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Clash of titan egos, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5651.0	(-51.8)
FTSE All share	2656.01	(-18.94)
Nikkei	16198.00	(-411.49)
New York		
Dow Jones	6350.77	(-19.43)
S&P Composite	1034.98	(-3.16)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	102 1/8%	(102 1/8%)
Yield	5.95%	(5.90%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Life long gilt	12 1/2%	(12 1/2%)
future (Mar)		

STERLING

New York	1.6505*	(1.6450)
London	1.6472	(1.6361)
DM	2.9883	(2.9559)
FF	5.9585	(5.9144)
Sfr	2.3986	(2.3654)
Yen	210.81	(210.25)
£ Index	104.8	(104.4)

DOLLAR

London	1.8004*	(1.7955)
DM	6.0373*	(6.0260)
FF	1.4633	(1.4495)
Yen	118.07*	(117.17)
£ Index	108.5	(108.5)

Tokyo close Yen 127.98

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (May)	\$14.25	(\$14.35)
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GOLD

London close	\$292.15	(\$293.85)
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* denotes midday trading price

Takeover talk rife after slump at Safeway

By FRASER NELSON

SAFEWAY returned its worst growth figures since the recession yesterday, fuelling City speculation that Asda is weeks away from mounting a renewed attempt to take over its supermarket rival.

Colin Smith, chief executive of Safeway, confirmed that the supermarket chain finished behind J Sainsbury, Asda and Tesco over the crucial Christmas trading period — with underlying sales up only 1.1 per cent.

This undershot even the most pessimistic City estimates, and compares miserably with the 10 per cent underlying growth which Asda estimates it generated over Christmas. Tesco returned growth of 6.5 per cent for the period, and J Sainsbury 3.2 per cent. Safeway also issued a profits warning, saying that its low sales growth had come with high pressure on margins after a series of technical failures.

City analysts said that the company is now at its most vulnerable, having invested an extra £20 million in its stores with few signs of return. Asda, which aborted merger talks with Safeway last year, is expected to make a move soon.

Paul Smiddy, retailing analyst at Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, said: "Safeway badly needs synergies from getting together with another major player. Asda has not gone away and they are bound to be looking at it again in the next few weeks."

Mr Smith said that Safeway's sales growth re-

bounded to 3.2 per cent in the first seven weeks of the new year and it has excellent prospects as an independent company. "We have not been in takeover talks and have had no contact with Asda," he said. "My agenda is to rebuild Safeway's profit."

Mr Smith also detailed Safeway's recovery plan, which involved spending £40 million on price cuts, store refurbishment and advertising over the next year to help restore its image. He said: "We are beginning to see improvement, but it has all been achieved at some cost."

Autumn trading was crippled after its central re-ordering computer crashed, leading to empty shelves and disappointed customers. This was resolved in November but was blamed for lasting damage on the stores' reputation.

The company is also disposing of 44 loss-making Safeway and Presto stores, at a cost of £25 million. It said that job losses will be "minimal".

Over the 19 weeks to February 21, underlying sales growth was 1.4 per cent. The company's pre-tax profits are now expected to decline 11 per cent to £375 million in the current financial year, with the dividend held at 14.1p. Analysts at its house broker, Panmure Gordon, are not expecting any growth until the millennium. Safeway's shares fell 9 1/2p to 35 1/2p on the statement, valuing the company at £3.9 billion.

Commentary, page 25



Food for thought: Colin Smith intends to offer shoppers more cut-price groceries

Provisions at NatWest Markets dent profits

By RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

NATWEST, which yesterday reported a 10 per cent drop in pre-tax profits to £1.01 billion, paid about £200 million in severance costs to staff at its former equities business.

The pay-off is contained in a £292 million charge for the closure of the rump of the high street bank's equities operation. In total, NatWest Markets, the investment banking arm, incurred a loss of £706 million in 1997.

Derek Wanless, chief executive, blamed the year's poor results on NatWest Markets, and insisted the core UK retail and commercial banking businesses were strong. Pre-tax profits at NatWest UK rose 48 per cent to £962 million.

However, the group was also hit by provisions against its £1.72 billion exposure to South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand. While NatWest said non-performing loans amounted to £59 million, it made a general provision of £30 million for the possible losses in the region. NatWest Markets also set aside £17 million to cover problems in the Far East.

NatWest took a knock in the US too, where it has decided to close the Coouts business, the private banking subsidiary, largely as a result of some poor lending. It said specific charges would have to rise by £59 million to £67 million "due to a small number of significant provisions in Courts".

The only highlight of the results was a loose promise to return excess capital to shareholders, probably through a share buyback. Yet the bank declined to detail how much of

its capital it would distribute. Mr Wanless acknowledged that 1997 had been poor, but said he believed that the year would turn out to be a "watershed" for the bank. On continued speculation about a merger with Barclays, Mr Wanless said that further consolidation in the banking industry was likely, but insisted that NatWest had a future as an independent player.

NatWest announced a final dividend of 21.6p, taking the total to 32.2p, up 11 per cent. Shares in the bank dropped 26p, or 2.3 per cent, to £10.99.

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Building profits

Operating profits of Wimpey, Britain's largest housebuilder, have bounced back to their pre-recession level. Joe Dwyer, the group's chairman, said that operating profits rose by 57 per cent in 1997, to £81.4 million, their highest in a decade. Page 24

Deal sought

Sema, the Anglo-French courier services company, is looking for an acquisition in America worth up to \$1 billion (£95 million). The company added that it would probably raise money through a share placing. Page 25

Greenspan leaves markets in a spin

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

ALAN GREENSPAN, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, yesterday said the American economy was finely balanced between the threats of deflation imported from Asia and inflation due to the low level of unemployment.

The Fed chairman's assessment of economic prospects in his Humphrey-Hawkins testimony to Congress was itself so balanced between the two threats that financial markets were left unsure how to react.

Bonds tumbled lower as traders digested his comment that the economic slowdown in Asia might not slow down American demand strongly enough to head off a rise in inflation. Share prices fell initially but then rallied on his remark that Asia could mean that US prices fall by more than is desirable. The Dow Jones industrial average fell by 55

points at first but had halved those losses by midday trade in New York.

Mr Greenspan said: "When confronted at the beginning of the month with these, for the moment, finely balanced, though powerful forces, the members of the Federal Open Market Committee decided that monetary policy should most appropriately be kept on hold."

US figures yesterday supported a benign view of inflation. Falling energy prices kept consumer prices unchanged in January, leaving the inflation rate at 1.6 per cent — the first time prices have shown no monthly change since January, 1994.

Japan reported a 21 per cent fall in domestic vehicle sales in January against a year ago and falls in sales at department stores and chain stores of 3.6 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively from a year ago.

EMI about to close deal on Waterstone's

By FRASER NELSON

EMI GROUP has agreed terms for its acquisition of Waterstone's book chain from WH Smith for about £300 million and may announce the deal today, City sources believe.

The company is joining forces with Advent International, the venture capitalist, to fund the acquisition and it is understood to have finalised all documents for the deal.

Tim Waterstone, the entrepreneur who founded Waterstone's, will chair the new company, which will also include Daisy & Tom, his children's clothing and toy store. EMI will then groom the company for an eventual flotation.

EMI shares rose 2p to 498p yesterday. City analysts expect the acquisition to have a negligible impact on its earnings this year.

Investors give Disney chairman rough ride

From OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

SHAREHOLDERS of the Walt Disney Company gave Michael Eisner, its chairman, a sticky time at the group's annual meeting yesterday when more than a third voted for a proposal to remove five close associates of Mr Eisner from the board.

The meeting was significantly calmer than last year's when shareholders staged a six-hour shouting match. But a few unruly investors, nevertheless, interrogated Mr Eisner about the appointment of his children's elementary school principal to the board during the sometimes stormy three-hour session.

The chairman had hoped to prevent a repeat of last year's ordeal by moving the meeting from Los Angeles to Kansas City, saying it was honouring the city where Walt Disney made his first cartoons.

The College Retirement Equities Fund, a US pension fund, proposed the motion that was aimed at forcing half the so-called independent directors off the board because, it claims, they are in Mr Eisner's pocket. They include his lawyer, his architect, his children's school principal and two previous Disney chairmen.

The motion demanded that independent directors should not be former employees of the company and have no financial ties with the company or its management, other than their salaries. Key panels should be made up entirely of independent directors.

The motion won 35 per cent backing, with support from pension funds including CalPERS, the giant Californian fund. Disney shares rose 50 per cent last year. Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor, is believed to have supported Mr Eisner.

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JP Morgan job losses to cut costs

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

JP MORGAN, the US investment bank, will sack 800 people worldwide, including 220 in London, to cut costs after a 35 per cent profit decline last year.

Internal documents also suggest the bank is looking for a merger partner. Goldman Sachs, the last big Wall Street partnership, is believed to be the preferred partner. But analysts have pointed out that Goldman would insist on controlling the merged group, something Morgan executives are likely to reject.

JP Morgan shares rose from \$112 to \$116 yesterday, giving it a market capitalisation of \$20 billion (£11.9 billion). Goldman is valued at around \$6 billion.

JP Morgan employs around 4,300 people in London, where its spokesman said: "So far, there are no breakdowns for regions or departments. Each department has been asked to look at staffing levels. There will be cuts at every level and in every department."

JP Morgan is the third largest US bank, after Chase Manhattan and Citicorp, to undertake job cuts in recent months. JP Morgan's fourth-quarter earnings tumbled to \$271 million from \$419 million as the Asian economic turmoil and other factors eroded profits.

Wimpey trading figure at best level in a decade

BY ADAM JONES

OPERATING profits of Wimpey, the UK's biggest housebuilder, have bounced back to their pre-recession level. Joe Dwyer, the group's chairman, said that operating profits rose by 57 per cent in 1997, to £81.4 million, their highest level in a decade.

However, he said that the post-recession housing market is still characterised by a cautious approach by housebuyers and modest price increases outside London and the South East.

Mr Dwyer suggested that 50 to 70 per cent of mortgages over the past six months have been arranged at five-year fixed rates, even though there has been speculation that base rates have peaked.

Fixed rates are good for the building industry, Mr Dwyer said, since buyers are less likely to be scared off by volatile interest rates.

Wimpey managed to increase its 1997 pre-tax profits from £31.5 million to £63.1 million, even though its exposure to London and the South East is small, by improving the productivity of sales outlets. Turnover fell by 3 per cent, to £1.2 billion.

The number of completed sales was almost unchanged at 13,456. Only about 3 to 4 per

cent of these were in the M25 area of London and the South East.

The average sale price rose by 9 per cent, to £72,100, in the Wimpey UK division, by 8 per cent, to £90,800, for McLean Homes and by 5 per cent, to \$158,000 (£96,600), for Morrison Homes in the US.

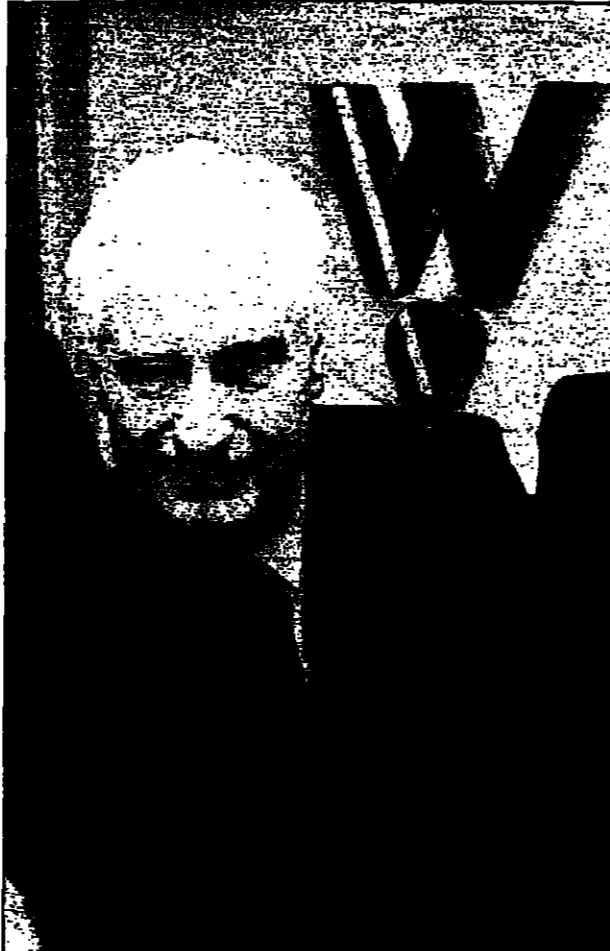
Mr Dwyer said that prices would have to rise by 2.5 to 3 per cent to meet increases in building costs this year. Wimpey expects price inflation of about 3 to 4 per cent, with less regional variation and a less volatile South East market.

The chairman said that Wimpey was not expecting any particularly damaging measures in the Budget and that any greenfield development tax would be difficult to implement successfully.

The group has £86 million of assets still to sell at the end of a restructuring that has seen it focus on housebuilding and get out of construction and aggregates via an asset swap with Tarmac. Sales in the first eight weeks of 1998 were up 8 per cent, to 2,437 homes, Wimpey said.

A dividend of 3.7p (3.5p) is due on May 14, making 5.7p (5.5p) for the year.

Tempos, page 26



Joe Dwyer says that housebuyers remain cautious

Standard sets up fund arm

By MARIANNE CURPHEY
AND GAVIN LUMSDEN

STANDARD LIFE is challenging the likes of Schroders, Mercury and Fidelity for dominance of the corporate pension and unit trust markets by launching its own dedicated fund management arm.

The Edinburgh mutual, established in 1825, announced yesterday that it had doubled the number of staff working in investment services to 440 and intended to double its investment business in three years.

Setting up the new subsidiary to manage all of the life and investment funds is thought to have cost Standard Life well over £100 million.

Standard Life's target is to double its investment business to £8 billion within three years and its unit trust business to £2 billion by launching seven open-ended investment companies (Oeics) in September.

The new company will concentrate on two areas - pooled corporate pension funds and retail sales of unit trusts.

Standard Life already has eight unit trusts but is planning to launch Oeics because it believes they are the savings vehicle of the future.

Oeics enable UK fund managers to sell their wares across Europe. Their development could see London eclipse Luxembourg as a centre of European fund management.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Former Abbey Life representative jailed

A FORMER sales representative for Abbey Life was yesterday jailed for four years at Southwark Crown Court yesterday for her involvement in an advance-fee fraud. Ingrid Green, 48, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud in a case in which, during 1990 and 1991, she and an associate, John Hancock, persuaded a number of businesses to part with more than \$2 million (£1.2 million) with the promise of providing loans which never appeared. Hancock was jailed for three years and three months having pleaded guilty to the same charge.

Emma Venton, a lawyer from the Serious Fraud Office, which prosecuted the case, said: "This fraud was operated through a network of lies and false promises." Green left Abbey Life in 1991, owing the company £1,000.

Plant hire groups merge

TARMAC and Bovis are to merge their plant hire businesses creating what is claimed to be the largest plant provider in Britain. It will have net assets of £56 million. Tarmac's Castle Plant Services is to be merged with Bovis Wysepplant and will be known as Castlewysc. It will be 50-50 owned by Tarmac and Bovis and have a national network of more than 30 depots. Profit before tax and exceptional items attributable to the assets transferred from Tarmac was £1.6 million.

Fairclough restructured

AMEC, the construction group, is to restructure its Fairclough Homes subsidiary but is to absorb the costs in 1998, which are expected to be covered by the anticipated savings. From March 1 the Southern and Hertfordshire regions are being merged to create a new south east region, based in Hertfordshire. In addition, the scale of the Midlands region is to be increased to take volumes from the present level of 281 units in 1997 to more than 400 units in 1999.

CRT acts as Catalyst

CRT, the education and business training group, has acquired the Catalyst group, a supplier of teachers and contract staff, for £8.27 million. As a result CRT will incur exceptional integration costs of about £300,000 to be charged to profits in the year to April. In the year to March 30, 1997, Catalyst reported sales of £10.1 million and operating profit of £500,000. CRT now has net cash of £35 million, which it will use to develop the group and to complete other acquisitions.

Minerva refinancing

MINERVA, the property company, has refinanced its loan facilities with new ones of £138 million, of which £125 million is being provided by Bradford & Bingley Building Society for a 25-year term, and the rest by Lloyds Bank, on a five-year facility. Minerva said the refinancing was "a significant enhancement in the group's debt maturity profile and replaces loans with an average weighted maturity of under three years". The average interest rate payable under these facilities is 7.6 per cent.

William Sinclair ahead

WILLIAM SINCLAIR HOLDINGS, the pet, household and horticultural products company, lifted pre-tax profit 26.7 per cent to £2.83 million in the half-year to December 31, on turnover that improved 13.7 per cent to £24.3 million. The interim dividend rises 14.3 per cent to 2.4p a share, payable on May 1, from earnings that rose 24.6 per cent to 8.6p. The company said that its two divisions were trading well and further growth was expected in the second half of the year.

Liddell plan for official statistics

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE Government yesterday published a Green Paper outlining proposals for improving the integrity of official statistics.

The paper, launched by Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary, puts forward four models for ensuring the quality and political independence of Britain's statistical service.

Describing the paper as another stage in the Government's progress towards a more modern democracy, she said: "The Green Paper, *Statistics: A Matter Of Trust*, will focus debate on how to ensure high-quality statistics are efficiently produced, and are compiled and presented in a way

which is clearly free of political interference."

The four models for improving the governance of official statistics are:

- Strengthening the existing system but delegating more responsibility for quality assurance and operational matters from ministers to government statisticians.

- Establishing a governing body for National Statistics, with a non-executive chair charged with monitoring the statistical service.

- Setting up an independent Statistical Commission.
- Forming a centralised statistical office reporting directly to Parliament.

Texas decision on Energy bid in next week

By ADAM JONES

ENERGY GROUP shareholders will know by early next week if they are to be presented with a second bid.

Texas Utilities is poised to announce whether it is to go head-to-head with PacifiCorp and make a bid for Energy, which owns Eastern Electricity in the UK and Peabody Coal in the US.

PacifiCorp has offered 765p a share. Texas has been thought to be planning a 800p a share offer. It needs to pre-arrange a deal with Lehman Merchant, part of the Lehman Group, to sell Peabody before it can go ahead with an offer for Energy.

Pension providers warn Chancellor

By ANNE ASHWORTH

THE pension industry has appealed to the Chancellor not to remove higher-rate tax relief on pension contributions, or to increase further the burden of taxation on pension funds in next month's Budget.

The National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) is growing nervous of another raid on pensions, after the removal of the dividend tax credit in Gordon Brown's first Budget last year. There are fears that a further tax rise could mean that companies become less willing to run pension schemes for employees.

Higher-rate pension relief on contributions could be under threat if Mr Brown decides to

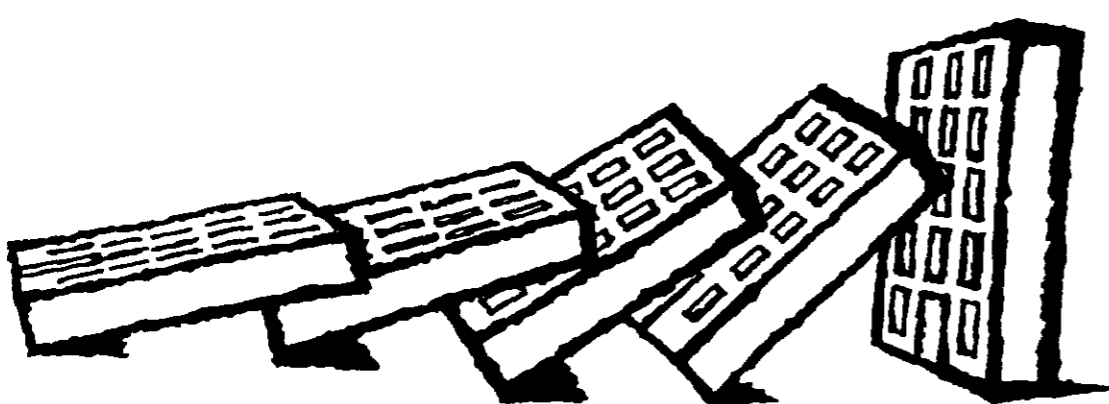
limit further the tax breaks given to the better off. The individual savings account, which will replace Peps and Tassas, is set to save the Treasury some £1.25 billion a year. Higher-rate pension relief costs £800 million. The NAPF argues that the abolition of higher-rate relief would discourage people from making provision for their old age while they can afford to do so.

The NAPF also warns the Chancellor not to impose a short-term capital gains tax on funds, as this would increase the administrative burden on funds and have an impact on the liquidity of the stock market.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	
Buy	Sell	
Australia \$	2.57	2.39
Austria Sch	21.87	20.21
Belgium Fr	64.40	59.44
Canada \$	2.470	2.282
Cyprus Cyp£	0.913	0.842
Denmark Kr	11.30	11.01
Finland Mk	9.25	8.80
France Fr	10.42	9.84
Germany Dm	3.15	2.88
Greece Dr	485	458
Hong Kong \$	13.60	12.40
Ireland £	1.31	1.11
Israel NIS	1.25	1.18
Italy Lit	4.32	5.87
Japan Yen	3105	2898
Japan Yen	225.88	208.13
Malta	0.983	0.924
Netherlands Gld	3.534	3.239
New Zealand \$	3.01	2.77
Norway Kr	13.00	12.08
Portugal Esc	318.12	294.09
S Africa Rd	6.84	7.88
Spain Ptas	202.90	244.13
Sweden Kr	14.02	12.82
Switzerland Fr	2.55	2.35
Turkey Lira	361945	361957
USA \$	1.758	1.613

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THE TIMES

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Will the gloves come off at Glaxo?

COMMENTARY by our City Editor

Less than a year ago, Sir Richard Sykes was adamant that there were to be no more mega-deals for Glaxo. Over lunch in the Savoy Grill, he recalled the pain of integrating Wellcome with Glaxo after the £9 billion takeover — hard to believe that, back in 1995, that miserly sum ranked as the biggest ever British takeover bid.

He talked of the problems of putting together two businesses with their own cultures, of the difficulties of trying to maintain corporate morale while individuals were living through the dreadful uncertainty of not knowing whether their job would survive and whether they, or someone from the former rival organisation, would be chosen to fill it. He acknowledged that some of the talent that should have been kept had left of its own accord.

In the case of Wellcome, the management agencies had been more than justified, as the performance of the combined company demonstrates, but said Sir Richard, he did not believe that there were other deals which could make the ghostly process worthwhile.

But memory fades, particularly when opportunism intervenes. When SmithKline Beecham indicated that it was prepared to sacrifice its independence and join forces with American Haze Products, Sir Richard's recollection of the downside of mergers was in-

stantly obliterated and he was hopping aboard Concorde faster than a merchant banker can calculate a fee.

The speed with which Jan Leschly was prepared to ditch AHP in favour of Glaxo left some question marks over his motivation for embracing the original partner but the case for the new proposal was overwhelming. With potential savings of £1 billion a year, one can see why Sir Richard was prepared to overcome his qualms about doing deals. But three weeks later, the arrangement is off. Shareholders who suddenly rejoiced that their employees had come up with a scheme that instantly added £23 billion to the worth of their combined businesses now see that bonus evaporating almost as quickly as it appeared.

If, as seems likely, the deal has foundered, on who should effectively run the joint company, then those shareholders, many of whom have holdings in both Glaxo and SB, should not merely shrug off the disappointment. If there is genuine industrial logic in putting the two together, then one top executive may not be an outrageous price to pay for effecting the merger. A hostile

bid is a more expensive route in the short term but the necessary premium could soon be cancelled out by the savings to be made. And if the aim is to create a world beating British pharmaceuticals company, then there can be no doubt as to who must go on the offensive. SmithKline Beecham is already as much of an American company as it is British. Indeed, if Sir Richard Sykes and Jan Leschly ever did seriously think that they could work together as chairman and chief executive, it seems that the idea collapsed when it became apparent that Sykes would be based in London but Leschly intended running the business from the United States.

Sir Richard was never going to find it easy sharing power, but with the Atlantic separating him from his chief executive, he would have found it impossible. If he really believes the argument for putting

the two businesses together, he should stop pussy footing and start fighting.

Merger talks look a safe bet for Safeway

Sir Alistair Grant gave up being a grocer last April, and headed north to chair Scottish & Newcastle and grace the board of the Bank of Scotland. Either his absence has impacted far more dramatically on Safeway than anyone might have imagined, or the problems were being stored up long before Sir Alistair decided to head back home.

The talk of years of under-investment which was the subject to yesterday's dismal figures from the group was clearly intended to indicate that chief executive Colin Smith should not be left carrying all the blame. The determination to spread this around has already seen the

trading director sent packing. But even after the advance warnings, these figures were disarmingly bad. To have grown sales by just over 1 per cent in the crucial Christmas period shows just how much Safeway was losing ground to its competitors.

Despite the cloying efforts of Mottly and her advertising campaign. The list of excuses and explanation has ranged through dire distribution to computer ordering errors but the totality is of a business which was unable to match the slick retail skills of Tesco and lacks the customer franchise of Sainsbury.

Safeway would like the City to see a parallel, between itself and Sainsbury, which saw its profits slump when Lord Sainsbury relinquished the chairmanship to his nephew David. But while Sainsbury needed a management shake-up, Safeway's problems go further. The company has too many shops that are the wrong size in the wrong location

and it needs a radical solution. That is why, just a few months ago, it was seriously discussing its future with Asda. The insistence that those talks have been abandoned simply because word leaked has never seemed entirely logical. The merger of Kwik Save and Somerfield makes a resurrection of the idea more likely.

Taking account of a bank's performance

NatWest is able to boast that its core business produced a 48 per cent rise in profits. This is a line that customers should bear in mind for the next time they face a delicate negotiation with their manager.

The core business amounts to what is left after extracting itself from all the disaster areas, such as derivatives. If every business could simply cast off the nasties, they too should be able to boast healthy returns from what is left. But the NatWest figures can hardly be seen as a tribute to the achievements of chairman Lord Alexander and chief executive Derek Wanless. The scale of the nasties they

are now admitting to indicates bad judgment as much as bad luck. They waited until NatWest Markets had moved from bad to worse before deciding to do as Barclays, and how out but it is the less publicised problems areas that raise eyebrows. How can Coutts in America have evaluated its customers so rashly? How can employee costs have been allowed to soar when numbers are supposedly reducing?

Perhaps the threat, however much perceived rather than real, of a bid from Barclays will have shaken NatWest management into sharpening up its act but clearly this is not before time. And the decision to allow the corporate financiers in the still nameless reincarnation of what was Hambro Magan to hold onto half the profits they generate hardly has the ring of firm leadership about it.

Lure of the Dome

TONY BLAIR has come to the rescue of the Millennium Dome and, with prime ministerial encouragement, the list of sponsors is growing. Tesco and Manpower have now volunteered to put up £12 million apiece alongside BT, BA and BAA. Their involvement is commercial, not charitable. They would be failing in their duty to shareholders if they did not see that their contribution to saving the project is well rewarded. A Tesco Metro store for the Dome?

Sema prepared to spend up to \$1bn on US acquisition

By CHRIS AYRES

SEMA, the Anglo-French computer services company, is looking for an acquisition in America worth up to \$1 billion (£595 million).

The London-listed company, whose major shareholders are France Telecom and Paribas, had to reorganise last year because the US authorities said it was technically owned by a bank, making it unable to operate in non-financial markets.

Pierre Bonelli, chief executive, said: "We have not yet divined on any pray because we have not found any target. We'll do it when the timing is

right, and with caution. If in the year 2001 our US operations aren't at least 15 per cent of our turnover we will be disappointed." He added that the company, which plans to take on 1,000 staff this year, would probably raise money through a share placing.

M Bonelli would not name possible targets but said that a large joint venture with a bank or a telecoms operator could also be possible. He dismissed fears that the US market could be risky. "I don't think it's any more risky than the Far East or Italy," he said.

Sema yesterday reported

pre-tax profits of £64 million for 1997, up 28 per cent from £50 million. Turnover was £1.1 billion, up 22 per cent from £927 million, while earnings per share rose from 30.9p to 39.1p. A dividend of 7.3p, up from 6p, will be paid on July 1.

The company said it expected further growth in the UK Government-led outsourcing market this year. It recently won a contract from the Department of Social Security to provide medical services. M Bonelli also said that he expected growth in telecoms markets, especially in payments systems, customer care, billing and even voicemail.

However, he admitted that defence markets, which used to be the strongest part of Sema's business, had been a disappointment and that the company was considering a major review of its position.

He said: "Defence has not been a tremendous market for us and to an extent that has been disappointing. It is being affected by budgetary constraint, we just have to live with that because I'm afraid that is the way the market is going." Asked if Sema would consider leaving the market, Mr Bonelli said: "I guess we need to leave it a little while to see how it reorganises."

The shares fell slightly to £18.87, compared with 26.4p in 1994. Mr Bonelli said he was "getting more convinced by British colleagues" that a stock split was necessary. However, he added that such a decision would have to be made at the next annual meeting.



Gordon Hodgson, who is switching from chief executive to executive chairman of Arriva, the bus operator and car dealer

Capita ahead with 49% rise

By CHRIS AYRES

THE Government was praised yesterday for "demonstrating the ability to be controversial on cost savings" by Capita, the outsourcing company, bidding as part of a consortium to take control of National Savings and the Benefits Agency.

Paul Pindar, managing director of Capita, made the comments as he reported a 49 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for 1997 from £12.3 million to £18.3 million.

Capita had feared that a Labour Government would scupper many of its predecessor's privatisation plans, including the scheme to sell off National Savings, which could result in enormous job losses. However, Mr Pindar said: "It's business as usual. In fact, Mr Brown is probably a tighter Chancellor than his predecessor."

Capita, which looks after pensions for more than three million people and administers £5 billion worth of council tax and business rates payments every year,



Pindar: praise

saw turnover rise 55 per cent from £112 million to £173 million. Earnings per share rose 37 per cent from 4.75p to 6.51p, and a total dividend of 2.1p, up from 1.6p, will be paid on April 29.

Capita is leading one of the three consortiums that are "shadowing" state welfare operations for a year to demonstrate ways they can cut costs while improving quality. Mr Pindar said: "It's a process of mutual brain picking. But we won't get a penny of revenue out of it in 1998."

Wonderware to join Siebe stable

By MARTIN BARROW

SIEBE, the diversified engineering group, is buying Wonderware Corporation, a US software company serving the industrial automation market, for \$375 million (about £228 million).

The UK company is offering \$24 for each Wonderware

Three-way battle for Ewart as new bidder joins fray

By KATHY LIPARI

A THIRD, unnamed, bidder has entered the battle for Ewart, the Irish property group under attack from Moyne, a Northern Ireland consortium, and Dunloe House.

During the day Moyne and Dunloe, a rival property group, raised their prior offers of 79p and 80p respectively to 81p. However, Ewart directors revealed after a board meeting late yesterday that a third party, a "substantial UK listed company", was in negotiations with the board and

advised shareholders to do nothing while talks continued. The third party has undertaken to finalise any offer made to Ewart by March 3.

Barry Gilligan, Ewart's chief executive, said: "It's a no lose situation for shareholders. We've already managed to get the bid up to 81p."

Mr Gilligan said the third bidder, who had approached Ewart for the first time last week, was prepared to match the 81p in cash and would make a "tangibly higher"

shares offer. Moyne made its first offer for Ewart on Monday at 79p, topping two rebuffed bids of 67p and 75p made by Dunloe.

Town Centre Securities, the property firm, and a group of business people backed by John McCuckian, chairman of Ulster Television, had been mentioned in the past as white knight bidders for Ewart. However, Town Centre recently pulled out of talks with the group. Ewart's shares closed up 1p to 70 1/2 p.

Buses deal helps Arriva reach £101m

By FRASER NELSON

ARRIVA, the transport company formerly known as Cowie Group, increased profits from its bus division from £32.2 million to £50.1 million last year after bedding down its acquisition of British Bus Group.

The company, now Britain's third-largest bus operator, lifted its pre-tax profit from £81.2 million to £101 million last year in spite of a decline in profits from its car leasing division.

However, City analysts said that the company had enjoyed most of the spoils from UK privatisation, and is now heading for single-digit earnings growth, with profits of £115 million expected this year.

Arriva's car dealership division was the star performer, after its shift to more expensive marques helped profits to jump by 26 per cent, to £11.7 million, on sales only 9.3 per cent better, at £671 million.

Earnings per share rose to 36.1p (33.2p). A final dividend of 9.9p, making a total of 13.5p (12.4p), is due on April 17.

Car dealer sees profits rise 58%

Dixon Motors, the car retailer, saw pre-tax profits leap 58 per cent to £27.7 million in the year to end December, its fifth consecutive year of earnings growth, and is off to a strong start in 1998. Paul Dixon, chief executive, said trading since the year end had been encouraging with sales in January 15 per cent better than in the same month last year on a like-for-like basis and 63 per cent higher including acquisitions.

During the year, Dixon spent £21.9 million on acquisitions and £13.8 million on investing in the group. Turnover in 1997 jumped 57 per cent to £413.6 million while earnings per share increased 32 per cent to 26.3p. Investors will receive a final dividend of 5p making a total of 7.5p, up from 6p in 1996.

Pifco ahead

Pifco Holdings, the household electricals group, raised pre-tax profits by 43 per cent to £2.1 million in the six months to October 31. Turnover was up 12 per cent to £24.2 million and trading margins up from 6 per cent to 7.9 per cent. Earnings per share rose 36 per cent to 10.4p and the half year dividend rises 20 per cent to 3p. Shares rose from 189p to 196 1/2 p.

Downgrade

Cable & Wireless, the international telecommunications group, yesterday shrugged off a downgrade by Moody's, the debt assessment agency. Moody's downgraded C&W from "stable" to "negative" largely on the grounds that the telecoms group was exposed to any currency problems that might hit Hong Kong because of its controlling stake in Hongkong Telecom. C&W shares rose 5p to 67 1/2 p.

NZ rejection

New Zealand's competition regulator has rejected the takeover bid by Stagecoach, the UK transport group, for Auckland's Yellow Bus Company.

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STOCK MARKET

Stock Market Writer of the Year

Speculators confident of further mega-mergers

A SHARP fall yesterday in share prices of SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo Wellcome...



A gesture to a colleague from one of the Frankfurt bourse traders who wore costume yesterday for the carnival season of 47 million.

However, any suggestion that the end of the talks would also burst the speculative bubble that has underpinned the London stock market in recent months seems unlikely.

The FTSE 100 index, down almost 118 points at one stage, cut its deficit to 31.8 as it rose back above the 3,600 level to close at 3,651.0.

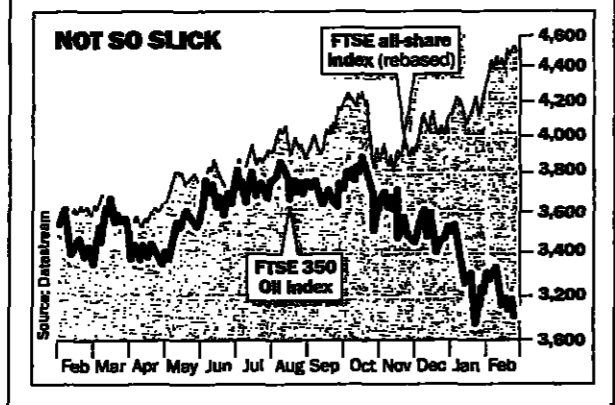
Elsewhere in the drugs sector, Zeneca failed to dodge the fall-out, losing 7 1/2p. It has been seen as a takeover target for some time and would have attracted fresh support had the deal between Glaxo and SmithKline gone ahead.

full-year figures due today and expected to show a small downturn in operating profits. Word is that the figures may be accompanied by cash hand-out to shareholders...

Another merger candidate in the news yesterday was Safeway, down 9 1/2p at 355 1/2p.

after its third profit warning in just over a year. The group has forecast profits of £375 million, against £425 million last year.

MSB International stood out with a jump of 35p, to 807 1/2p, as the shares continued to enjoy something of a re-rating.



Shares in the big oil companies came under the hammer again after Société Générale Strauss Turnbull, the broker, cut its 1998 forecast for the oil price from \$17 to \$15 a barrel.

in final profits failing to impress the City. Barclays was 17p off at £18.59. Talk that both sides will eventually tie the knot continues to do the rounds.

A "buy" recommendation from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, lifted the BAT Industries 17p to 598p.

Servent Trent came under selling pressure, falling 16p to 902p, after brokers met the company on Monday.

News of a share buyback lifted Walsby 1 1/2p to 38p. The company has bought back 450,000 of its shares at 37p.

Oil consumption of some 400,000 barrels a day, which has added to the problem of oversupply. SocGen's team of oil analysts say that there is "no control device to restrain the fall in prices".

Table of international stock market indices including New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Sydney, Frankfurt, Singapore, Brussels, Paris, Zurich, London, and Athens.

Table of UK stock market indices including FTSE 100, FTSE 250, FTSE 350, FTSE All-Share, FTSE Non-Financials, FTSE Fixed Interest, FTSE Govt Secs, FTSE 1000, FTSE 1000 Net, FTSE 1000 Div, FTSE 1000 Yield, FTSE 1000 P/E, FTSE 1000 Div Yield, FTSE 1000 P/B, FTSE 1000 P/S, FTSE 1000 P/C, FTSE 1000 P/M, FTSE 1000 P/CF, FTSE 1000 P/OP, FTSE 1000 P/EP, FTSE 1000 P/BV, FTSE 1000 P/NAV, FTSE 1000 P/FCF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF.

Table of UK stock market indices including FTSE 100, FTSE 250, FTSE 350, FTSE All-Share, FTSE Non-Financials, FTSE Fixed Interest, FTSE Govt Secs, FTSE 1000, FTSE 1000 Net, FTSE 1000 Div, FTSE 1000 Yield, FTSE 1000 P/E, FTSE 1000 Div Yield, FTSE 1000 P/B, FTSE 1000 P/S, FTSE 1000 P/C, FTSE 1000 P/M, FTSE 1000 P/CF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF, FTSE 1000 P/FCF.

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WATERSHED FOR WANLESS?

FOR all its bluster about wanting to remain independent, yesterday's figures from NatWest indicate an organisation in some difficulties. Even if you ignore the £706 million loss incurred by the bank's exit from equities trading, the results remain profoundly disappointing.

fell from £332 million to £199 million, operating expenses rose by 3 per cent, excluding the cost of the branch closure programme. Return on equity exceeds 27 per cent, but this looks poor when compared with Lloyds TSB, which is generating a 40 per cent return on group equity, while keeping operating costs flat.

However this dreary performance might be a reason why NatWest shares are a better bet than Lloyds TSB. After all NatWest's return surely has to improve. The bank says it will cut 10,000 jobs over the next two years which, assuming an average salary of £28,000, means a £280 million drop in operating costs. And if it does not deliver these improvements, ideally with a sparkling set of figures this time next year, the City will no doubt be touting NatWest as a candidate for takeover.

George Wimpey is on the way back. That was the message from yesterday's results and the 5 1/2p rise in the share price to 117p may well be the sign of things to come.

Wimpey beat heavily on a housing market revival by focusing on housebuilding through an asset swap with Tarmac at the start of 1996. The swap gave it McLean Homes, which sells slightly pricier property than its Wimpey brand.

Although its landbank is weaker than Wimpey Homes's, a fact some analysts blame on Tarmac's under-investment, McLean was the better performer in yesterday's year-end results, even though it has no exposure to the more lucrative M25 zone, the epicentre of the recovery in the residential market. McLean's operating profit margin increased 49 per cent to 11.4 per cent. This compares with just under 6.5 per cent for Wimpey Homes.

THE blurring of the traditional engineering and information technology sectors makes it difficult to assess when an acquisition represents value. When Siebe, an engineer not previously known for over-paying, announces the purchase of Wordware, a US business for 66.1 times last year's net profits, investors can do no more than assume the UK company knows what it is doing.

Siebe has a long record of making acquisitions that have quickly paid their way. Indeed, the company's emergence as one of Britain's most formidable industrial enterprises owes much to the timing and terms of acquisitions such as Foxboro, which were not universally applauded but subsequently delivered the goods.

Equipment used in process automation and control increasingly relies on the sophisticated computer software that is designed and produced by a different sector of industry. Siebe believes it is more cost effective to buy in the expertise, albeit at the inflated prices.

Wordware's leading product is FactorySuite, a product line with diverse applications based on Microsoft Windows software. It is, apparently, the hot product in industry at the moment. Wordware's forecast profits are \$18 million (£10.6 million) this year, up from \$5.9 million in 1997.

Siebe says the deal will enhance underlying earnings and was happy to pay a 50 per cent premium to Wordware's Nasdaq value. Until firmer evidence is available Siebe is unlikely to fully recover its premium rating.

An alternative view is that Admiral is far more likely to become a victim of its own success. The company's forecast earnings growth of 25 to 30 per cent is already reflected in its share price. The earliest hint of bad news could prompt a sharp correction. Investors would be wise to hold rather than buy.

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Table of commodity prices including COCOA, ROBUSTA COFFEE, WHITE SUGAR, MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION, and various oil products.

Table of commodity prices including GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES, RUBBER, and various oil products.

Table of commodity prices including METALS, RUBBER, and various oil products.

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Large advertisement for Buick cars, featuring a close-up of a person's face and the text 'A rush of the chief reasons' and 'The Buick loom'.

Budget is test of Brown's fine words

To judge from the communiqués published at the weekend's Group of Seven meeting and the Group of Eight jobs summit, Gordon Brown has seized full advantage of his current chairmanship to push his own agenda, whether it be on the question of reforming the world financial system post-Asia or on tackling unemployment.

The G7 communiqué repeated, in virtually the same order, the post-Asia ideas that Mr Brown outlined in a letter to Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, in January.

In his letter, the Chancellor wrote that it would be important to ensure that private investors had "a continuing, and if possible enhanced, incentive to make a full assessment of risks before they invest in emerging market countries". In the communiqué, the G7 echoed his sentiment that banks

ought to be made to pay for their mistakes, writing that the private sector should "share both the profits and losses appropriately". The Chancellor wrote that the IMF should consider being more transparent in its dealings with members. The G7 wrote that IMF arrangements should be more transparent and accountable.

Some cynics of G7 summits, notably Stephen Lewis, of Monument Derivatives, ascribe Mr Brown's evident dominance of the drafting process to a paucity of ideas among his partners. Mr Lewis said: "So bereft of fresh ideas are the G7's policymakers that Gordon Brown was able to pad out the two communiqués that were released at the end of the meetings with references to his

own preoccupying concerns in the areas of job training and social exclusion. Indeed, as chairman of the proceedings, he was obliged to do this to maintain the illusion that the ministers had been engaging in fruitful discussions."

It is true that these meetings are often frustratingly empty affairs that, at best, trigger incremental change. However, Mr Lewis's understandable scepticism underestimates Mr Brown, who had a genuinely good summit weekend.

Even if his G7 colleagues have no ideas of their own, it takes unusual persuasiveness to get them to sign up, with such apparent totality, to his, given the national egos involved. It might be argued that these communiqués are pretty meaningless averages of



JANET BUSH

opinion, but they do actually form the basis of future nuts-and-bolts work done throughout the year by civil servants. What they say is not entirely unimportant.

It should be noted, too, that Mr Brown appears to have notched up one concrete success from the weekend in persuading America

to join him in pushing for an acceleration of debt relief for the world's poorest countries.

The G8 communiqué could not have been a more accurate account of Mr Brown's policy agenda. In the case of jobs, Mr Brown, armed with close knowledge of the American model, is genuinely leading the debate in a Europe that is increasingly desperate for imported solutions to its unemployment crisis. His agenda of employability, social inclusion, lifelong learning and the rest is rapidly becoming the agenda of Europe, and Britain's presidency of the European Union is a good opportunity to push it forward.

Since their inception, jobs summits have been routinely and justifiably criticised as talking shops,

but Mr Brown shows considerable determination to achieve pan-European action on his current thinking. After all, Mr Brown has to do his best to ensure that, if and when Britain signs up to the single currency, Europe is structured for success.

It is refreshing to see a British Chancellor so obviously at the forefront of these international policy-working sessions. Mr Brown is clearly a tireless ideas man and is relishing his contributions to the international debate.

In the end, however, ideas are simply ideas. Putting them into action, and proving them to be a success, is what's important. Remember that the much-hyped New Deal does not go national until April and it will take quite

some time to judge whether it is effective in getting young people back into the jobs market. Next month's Budget will be a fascinating signal of just how boldly Mr Brown and his team intend to implement their theoretical ideas for economic reform.

There has been much furious intellectual activity since the election. Countless task forces and reviews have been set in motion and roadshows have rolled across the country selling ideas to the electorate (ie furious members of the Labour Party). Some of the actual policy decisions that have emerged from all this so far have not been unqualified triumphs. Individual savings accounts and cuts in lone mother benefits come uncomfortably to mind.

This Budget is hugely important for Mr Brown's credibility, not only at home but also to his considerable and growing audience abroad.

Clash of the titan egos provides chief reason for merger failure

Talks collapse is bitter pill for SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo, writes Paul Durman

Jan Leschly could be forgiven for lacking some of his customary bounce this morning. The enthusiasm and drive of the SmithKline Beecham chief executive mark him out as one of life's winners. But having pulled out of a £75 billion merger last month, and abandoned a £10 billion deal this month, Mr Leschly could stake a decent claim to be the world's least successful businessman.

SmithKline Beecham's failure to follow through on its betrothal to Glaxo Wellcome was greeted in the City with a mixture of disbelief, irritation and anger. The merger would have created the world's largest pharmaceutical group, with scope for savings estimated at £1.5 billion a year. The prospective benefits to shareholders were measured in tens of billions of pounds. Yet all this potential has been thrown away seemingly because the two teams of management were unable to work together.

SB insists that the deal foundered because of a complex matrix of disagreements between the two companies, including differences in their approach to the merger, their management philosophies and corporate cultures. Few shareholders believe this. They suspect a much more straightforward clash of egos between Mr Leschly and Sir Richard Sykes, chairman of Glaxo Wellcome.

It is this that most annoys investors who yesterday saw the combined stockmarket value of the two companies fall by about £14 billion. This is seen as the price for satisfying the vanity of a handful of senior executives who are already handsomely rewarded.

One large institutional investor said: "It's a staggering example of individual egos. The guys who run these companies have egos the size of which would be absolutely terrifying to behold. Mergers of this enormous size are being fought over by two men with small entou-



Sir Richard Sykes, left, and Jan Leschly were unable to agree on who should have the top job in the merged group

ages. It's medieval." Another senior fund manager said: "It's pretty disgraceful, but not too surprising. The great and the good happily are 5,000 or 10,000 jobs as long as they're staff. But when it comes to upsetting the odd ego in the boardroom, it's no deal."

When SB and Glaxo Wellcome announced their proposed deal at the end of last month they seemed to have already resolved the tricky problem of who would run the new drugs giant. Sir Richard would be chairman. Mr Leschly would be chief executive, and the board would include the three other big hitters - Robert Ingram, the recently appointed American chief executive of Glaxo Wellcome, John Coombe, its finance director, and Jean-Pierre Garnier, the head of SB's pharmaceuticals division. According to Nigel Barnes, analyst at Merrill Lynch, SB only agreed to terminate its talks with American Home Products - last month's merger partner - after Glaxo

Wellcome had given it firm assurances about the management structure.

But by last Friday Glaxo Wellcome was having second thoughts. According to one version, it objected to Mr Leschly becoming chief executive, presumably preferring Mr Ingram. Anyone who has met Mr Leschly will know that this will have been as popular as the discovery of a nasty side-effect to an SB drug. Mr Leschly, a former tennis professional who played with distinction at Wimbledon, is a youthful 57, and shows few signs of being ready for retirement.

Another version of the dispute has it centring on whether the number three job should go to Mr Ingram or to "JP" Garnier, Mr Leschly's right-hand man and heir apparent. Either way, Glaxo Wellcome's desire to renegotiate previously agreed parts of the deal soured relations. SB claims its chairman, Sir Peter Walters, tried to save the merger by dealing directly with Sir Roger Horn, the non-executive deputy chair-

man of Glaxo Wellcome. But it was to no avail. By Monday evening, SB board members were unanimous: insurmountable differences had arisen that would "undermine effective management of the merged group and impair its ability to deliver value creation fundamental to the merger". Given the scale of benefits apparently on offer, investors find this hard to believe.

Like SB, Peter Meinertzhagen, head of UK corporate finance at ABN Amro Hoare Govett, adviser to Glaxo Wellcome, insists that the disagreements were "much more fundamental" than who sat where around the boardroom table.

It seems valuation was not among them. It had been agreed at the outset that Glaxo Wellcome's shareholders would own 59.5 per cent of the enlarged group, with SB's investors owning the remainder. However, on a managerial basis SB expected to be treated as equals. Its recent results and short-term prospects are better than those of Glaxo Wellcome,

which is still adapting to the huge loss of sales from Zantac, the ulcer drug that lost its patent protection against cheap competition last year.

Mr Barnes at Merrill Lynch said SB's management became concerned that Glaxo Wellcome's people regarded the deal as a takeover, not a true merger of equals. As talks on combining the two businesses continued further down the management chain, SB's team detected "an incredible arrogance" within their opposite numbers at Glaxo Wellcome.

The collapse of the merger leaves Mr Leschly looking foolish and raises questions about the health of his business. To judge from last week's results, SB is in fine fettle, with underlying profits growth last year of 17 per cent, driven by impressive advances from a variety of its newer drugs. Reviewing the results, Mr Leschly showed his familiar ebullience.

But if SB is in such good shape, why does it feel the urge to merge? Analysts are starting to worry about Augmentin, the

antibiotic now generating sales of \$1.5 billion (£930 million) a year, because its patent has only four years to run. SB has also suffered a couple of recent setbacks with Memric, a treatment for Alzheimer's disease and Ultrair, an asthma drug. However, most analysts still take the view that these are small worries beside SB's well-diversified portfolio of recently launched and upcoming drugs.

The logic claimed for this and other pharmaceutical mergers is that they create groups with much greater strength in research and development - seen as the key to sustaining the rapid growth achieved by the industry in recent years. Marrying SB's expertise in genetics with Glaxo Wellcome's skills in chemistry would produce a group spending £2 billion a year on R&D - much more than any rival.

The trouble with this is that SB is hardly short of cash if it wants to plough more money into R&D. It spent £800 million last year, and it could easily afford more. The benefits from any merger would always have to be set against the risk of the deal going badly wrong.

One institutional investor cast doubt on the quality of SB's earnings, suggesting it was the sort of company that needed regular deals to "paper over the cracks" in its results. He pointed to the \$2.3 billion purchase of Diversified Pharmaceuticals Services, a deal Mr Leschly put to his board in his first week as chief executive four years ago. DPS, an American drug distributor, has so far failed to make any discernible contribution to SB's profits, although its acquisition is routinely defended by Mr Leschly and Mr Garnier.

Used to taking plaudits from his investors, Mr Leschly may face a more critical examination the next time he faces his shareholders.

parent. Prior to the takeover Tomskneft shares were worth about \$15 and have since declined by two thirds - the value mysteriously disappearing up the chain to Yukos.

The big combines, Yukos, Sibneft and Lukoil, derive most of their wealth from their control of local oil production associations. Clever companies have busied themselves tramping across Siberia hoovering up the interests of small shareholders cheaply but Yukos was slow and is paying the price. Foreigners complain about transfer pricing - in order to avoid high upstream taxes, oil companies sell crude at discounted prices to their downstream refineries, thus shifting wealth from production associations to the vertically integrated holding companies.

Yukos feels minority investors should be grateful the production associations were rescued from bankruptcy. Yukos inherited a \$1.2 billion tax liability from the production associations, debts which have recently been settled. Eugene Shvidler, Sibneft's chief financial officer, is irritated by claims from minority shareholders that share prices are being manipulated. "You know what these people tried to do in Brazil. It is the same thing, but we are not Brazil."

Back in 1993, Mr Dart amassed some \$1.4 billion in Brazilian debt and sued the central bank to get more accelerated payments than were on offer through the Brady deal. The Yukos management may well be worried that the dispute will end up in court.

Capitalism puts a price on everything and the price for Russian capitalism may be Kenneth Dart.

All to play for in Russian oil merger game

What do Siberian oil, foam plastic cups have in common? In the strange world of the new Russian oil companies, quite a lot, according to some accounts.

This is a world more akin to America in the 1900s, when power and money were not embarrassed to be seen in bed together, fertile territory for rich foreigners with capital to risk. One such investor is Kenneth Dart, the billionaire heir to a foam plastic cup empire, Dart Container Corporation. Mr Dart is unhappy about his treatment as a minority shareholder in Tomskneft, a subsidiary of Yukos, the Russian oil company which last month announced it was to merge with rival Sibneft, creating one of the world's largest energy groups, Yukos.

The management of Yukos is ambitious, with a vision that extends beyond Russia to Africa and Asia. It is clear that Mr Dart and other minority shareholders are cramping its style.

The prize in resource-rich Russia is to be the biggest oil company in the world, and the game is mergers. Several big groupings are jostling for position - five state-controlled oil companies will be sold off this year, of which the largest, Rosneft, is coveted by all four Russian giants and their allies: Lukoil; Gazprom and its partner, Shell; Sidanco and its shareholder, BP.

The fourth is Yukos, which controls 22 per cent of Russia's oil production. Yukos's bosses are keen to find their own foreign partner.

But then there is Mr Dart, who is said to own 13 per cent of Tomskneft and wants to be bought out. Tomskneft became part of the Yukos stable when the latter took over Eastern, its

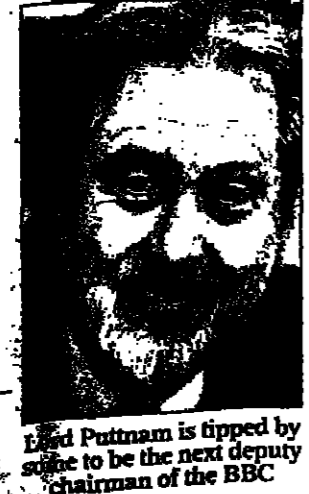
Carl Mortished

Eyre looms

SHE'S 75 years old and still as sprightly as ever. That's the message Auntie Beeb is putting round as it faces the new "challenges and opportunities" of the digital television age. And to help her to stride confidently into the new millennium, the BBC is advertising for some new governors.

At the head of the queue, I hear, is Lord Putnam, the recently ennobled film director. He is tipped to take the job of deputy chairman, currently held by Lord Cocks, though he may face competition from fellow luvvie and current gov-

ernor, Sir Richard Eyre, the theatre director. Whoever gets the post, one expects a lilac alliance attempting to temper the worst excesses of Birtism. However, should John Birt wish to head Putnam off at the pass, the bespectacled dalek might persuade Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC chairman, to seek a reference from Chris Wright, the Chrysalis chief. Putnam fell out with him over his plans to close the media group's film division and ended up storming out of a board meeting in protest.



Lord Putnam is tipped by some to be the next deputy chairman of the BBC

Offside TO THE Landmark Hotel - that's the one you see on the left as you come in to London on the A40 - for a stimulating address by Stephen Julius, the managing director of Stellican, the British investment company which last year bought Vicenza, the Italian Serie A football club. His talk, to an audience of experts on the business of sport, detailed the purchase of the club, managing it and bringing it to market in a stock market float - *à la* Manchester United, Newcastle United or... Millwall. Unfortunately the last part of the story was missing from his



speech, as Vicenza called off its fleet yesterday. The shareholders have decided it is not opportune at the moment," said Julius. No mention, then, of Vicenza's loss of form which means that the club is threatened with relegation.

Hittin' the Net I CAN'T wait for Friday's launch of Football 356, the Internet daily newspaper. Its shares start trading on Oxfex today. Not only have the backers had more than 10,000 inquiries from soccer fans in more than 75 countries but they have also signed up Andy Gray, the former Everton star and Sky Sports pundit, as a non-executive director. Though I bow to

no one in my admiration of Mr Gray's analysis of the nearest header, I remember fellow Caledonian football sage, Alan Hansen, taking a similar post at Singer & Friedlander's Football Fund. And look what happened there.

PERUSING the curriculum vitae of Lloyd Wigglesworth, the new chief executive of WH Smith News, I note an interesting period in his career when he was managing director of the Dutch Meat Marketing Board. How this prepared him for distributing newspapers, no one at Snuggs seems able to tell me.

Grape news WINEWORLD LONDON, the company behind the ambitious Vinopolis City of Wine visitor attraction, has finally closed the first phase of funding, a full eight months after starting the process.

The group - which now has £13 million of the £17.8 million that it says it needs - says the delay was because of the length of time taken for a £2.54 million grant to come through from English Partnerships, the Government's regeneration agency. But another reason could be British venture capitalists' lack of interest in the scheme, which will be housed under the railway arches in Southwark and

numbers Oz Clarke, the wine expert from Food and Drink, among its advisers.

Yesterday's announcement from Wineworld London, which expects to get a listing on the unregulated Oxfex market in the next few weeks, lists Smedvig Capital, the Scandinavian venture capital firm, as having stumped up £2.15 million. Given the region's lack of vineyards, Smedvig's involvement in a wine-based attraction appears surprising. But one source insisted: "The Scandinavians swing the stuff like there's no tomorrow. You've got to remember they have one of the highest alcoholism rates in the world."



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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFO

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سكنا من الأصل

Equities halve earlier losses

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low	Company	Price
1.15	1.12	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	1.13
1.15	1.12	BANKS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	BANKS	1.13
1.15	1.12	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST	1.13
1.15	1.12	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS	1.13
1.15	1.12	FOOD MANUFACTURERS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	FOOD MANUFACTURERS	1.13
1.15	1.12	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES	1.13
1.15	1.12	ELECTRICITY	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	ELECTRICITY	1.13
1.15	1.12	ELECTRONIC & ELECT	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	ELECTRONIC & ELECT	1.13
1.15	1.12	HEALTHCARE	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	HEALTHCARE	1.13
1.15	1.12	CHEMICALS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	CHEMICALS	1.13
1.15	1.12	HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT	1.13
1.15	1.12	CONSTRUCTION	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	CONSTRUCTION	1.13
1.15	1.12	INSURANCE	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	INSURANCE	1.13
1.15	1.12	DISTRIBUTORS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12	DISTRIBUTORS	1.13

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	INVESTMENT TRUSTS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	MEDIA	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	PHARMACEUTICALS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	SUPPORT SERVICES	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	PRINTING & PAPER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	PROPERTY	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	MINING	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	LEISURE & HOTELS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OIL & GAS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	BRITISH FUNDS	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	SHORTS (under 5 years)	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	LONGS (over 15 years)	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	UNDATED	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	INDEX-LINKED	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S	1997S
High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	High	Low
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, GENERAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	OTHER FINANCIAL	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	RETAILERS, FOOD	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	WATER	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12
1.15	1.12	ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET	1.13	+0.01	0.9	1.15	1.12

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سكزا من الاصل

Hugo's ding-dong strangely muted

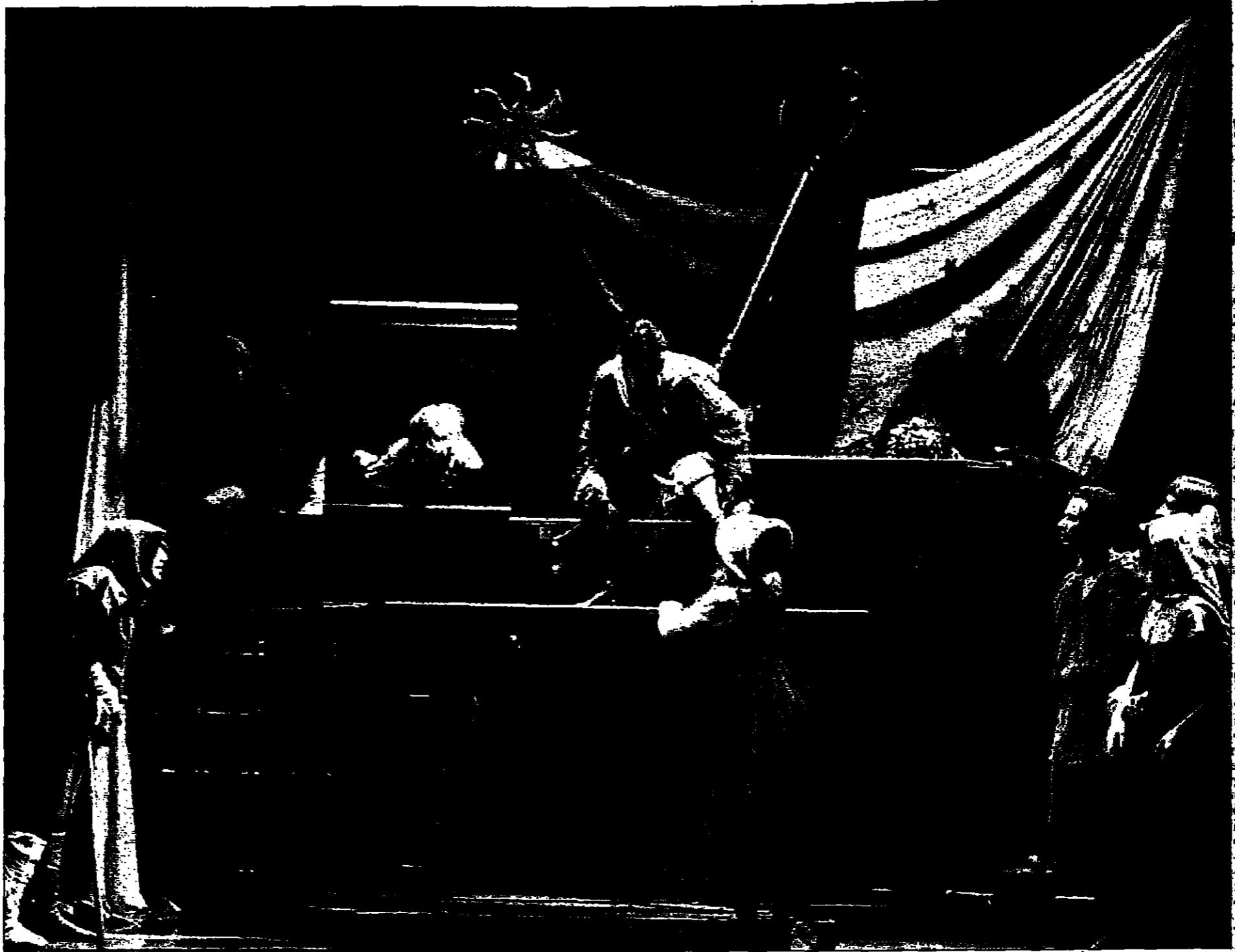
Victor Hugo's 1831 historical romance has proved an enduring presence on stage and screen. From Perrot's Romantic-era ballet in the middle of the 19th century to Disney's animated rewrite at the end of the 20th, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* has been captivating audiences with its medieval tale of love, lust, betrayal and murder. So if you were running Northern Ballet Theatre, a company always on the lookout for a story to tell, wouldn't you be tempted to have a go at Hugo?

Hunchback of Notre Dame Grand, Leeds

scores these days that one hesitates to criticise those who do. But Philip Feeny must shoulder much of the blame for this production's failure to achieve dramatic lift-off. His disjointed score encompasses an A to Z of musical styles, and settles on none. The overall effect is remarkably impersonal and without thematic direction. Lez Brotherston's designs, meanwhile, are handsome and more to the point, but marred by poor lighting. It is left to the choreography to provide motive and dramatic force. But while there are moments when Pink works hard at mining emotional truths - Frolo's ambitious lust is very well realised - there are too many others when the choreography is dull and listless, especially when it aims for romance.

Michael Pink, who directed and choreographed NBT's new *Hunchback*, and Christopher Gable, who devised the original scenario, recognised the potency and pathos in Hugo's trio of doomed suitors: the sexually-obsessed Archdeacon Frolo, the dashing Captain of the Guard, Phoebus, and the tragically deformed Quasimodo: three men sniffing around a single woman, all chasing the beautiful gypsy girl Esmeralda. But sometimes a book will tell you more than you want to know, and certainly more than dance can ever do. There is a limit to the number of characters an audience can absorb, a limit to the number of scenes it can appreciate. Why does Pink's production think it necessary to develop the narrative over 20 scenes? There are times when entire scenes are redundant or confusing, when characters fuse into obscurity. It is no accident that Act III is the best, for that is when Pink goes for the close-up, pitting Esmeralda, Frolo and Quasimodo against each other in streamlined, emotionally-charged confrontations that generate the only true excitement of the evening. So few people are actually writing full-length ballet

DEBRA CRAINE



Bells and smells: Northern Ballet Theatre's staging of the Victor Hugo tale of pathos, love and revenge, choreographed and directed by Michael Pink with Christopher Gable

Another round in the Irish bar

Seldom can a play have more thoroughly merited a transfer from the Royal Court's small stage to its main one than Conor McPherson's *The Weir*, which opened in the cramped bowels of the Ambassadors last July and is now revived in the ample but still acceptably intimate Duke of York's. A second viewing left me feeling that, simple though the piece still seems, it is subtler and richer than I first realised. Somehow McPherson man-

ages to ponder loneliness, failure, loss, metaphysical mystery, macho competition, even the identity crisis of rural communities whose economy has come to depend on caravanners from Nordic or Teutonic lands - and all in a drab, tacky bar at the back end of Sligo. Deftly, McPherson establishes a sense not exactly of poverty, but of deprivation. Those gathering beside the smelly old stove and the dysfunctional Guinness tap -

THEATRE The Weir Duke of York

Brendan Coyle as the taciturn proprietor, Jim Norton as the ageing, orotund owner of a small, unsuccessful garage, Kieran Aherm as his sidekick, a fortyish mother's boy - are single men with little to talk about except the strength and direction of the wind outside. Then in comes Des McAleer, exuding brash but brittle confidence as the married businessman they all somewhat envy - and this time accompanied by Julia Ford as the pretty young Dubliner to whom he has just sold a house with a slightly sinister reputation. The macho display that follows takes a form unimaginable in England but more than plausible in Ireland. The men try to impress the newcomer with tales, ghost stories, spooky anecdotes that begin by sounding as if they have been lifted from Lady Gregory's folk-archives but deepen

and darken and, without them quite knowing it, expose their own insecurities and fears. Then Ford's Valerie makes her contribution to the evening, and it is so distressing and baffling yet so unpretentiously authentic that it leaves the company floundering. They variously react with rationalist denial, shame, grief, wonder, respect - and, in the case of Norton's abrasive old gnome, with self-revelation hawked up from the remote past. This could be a mere coda after the emotional symphony is finished; but McPherson's description of a love sacrificed for some specious "freedom" is so finely written, and acted by Norton with such quiet intensity and restrained inclusiveness, that you are likely to find your tear-ducts have a reserve tank. But then *The Weir* as a whole is a beautiful play, and Ian Rickson's cast as near-perfect an ensemble as any in London. There aren't many productions this jaded reviewer would gladly visit a third or fourth time. This is one.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Do the Popeye

POP

IT IS, it must be admitted, some time since pianist Eddie Bo was the New Orleans king of the Popeye - a dance craze spawned by his 1962 hit *Check Mr Popeye*. Mind you, by that time Bo was already a recording star of seven years' experience who had seen one of his earlier successes, *I'm Wise*, commanded by a young upstart called Little Richard, who renamed it *Slippin' and Slidin'*. Bo - full name Edwin J. Boag - also managed to get a hand, write songs for such artists as Etta James and build his own night club. But now he has returned to his first love, performing. "I'm going to bring New Orleans right on down," he promised

as he sat down at the electric keyboard, a dapper figure with glasses, goatee beard and hat. And he did, by launching into an unbridled version of Professor Longhair's *Big Chief*. Backed by guitar, bass and drums, he then whizzed through *Land of 1,000 Dances*, which turned into an energetic, if predictable, cover of *Mustang Sally*. All the time Bo's shoulders were shaking, his legs jumping, and his huge hands and long fingers stabbing the keyboard.

The tempo slowed for Jimmy Hughes's *Steal Away*, which gave Bo the chance to show off his still considerable vocal talents, before we were back in New Orleans for another Longhair number, *Go to the Mardi Gras*. A short but entertaining set ended with the Hawks' *Mardi Gras Mambo*. Before the number had finished, Bo had shimmed off stage, waving wildly. Not an earth-shattering gig, but a reminder of how good genuine New Orleans music can still be.

JOHN CLARKE
● Mardi Gras, page 32

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER THE TIMES

FREE TICKETS FOR GOOD WILL HUNTING

PLUS GET A FREE SPECIAL EDITION SCREENPLAY

Readers of *The Times* have an exclusive chance to see *Good Will Hunting* with two free tickets for a special screening on Wednesday March 4, two days before it goes on general release. This astounding film has been nominated for nine Academy Awards including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Original Screenplay. It has already won The Golden Globe Award for Best Original Screenplay for young writers and stars Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. In addition, *The Times* and Faber and Faber have arranged for you to receive a unique offer: an exclusive special edition paperback of the award-winning screenplay. Lifelong friends Matt Damon and Ben Affleck have written a film that is funny, ironic and profoundly moving. It tells the story of an angry 20-year-old, from a tough, working class neighbourhood and in trouble with the law, who has the ability to solve mathematical problems instantly and summon obscure historical references from a photographic memory. His only hope is a psychologist, played by Robin Williams, who has sympathy for his emotional struggles and understands what it is like to fight your way through life.



HOW TO GET YOUR 2 FREE CINEMA TICKETS

Attach four differently numbered Free Film Tickets tokens to the voucher which will appear tomorrow. Present them, between Thursday February 26 and close of business on Sunday March 1, at one of the 72 participating cinemas. The list will be published again on Friday and Saturday. You will be entitled to receive a pair of free tickets for the private screening on Wednesday March 4, subject to seat availability and allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

THE TIMES FREE FILM TICKETS TOKEN 3

HOW TO GET YOUR FREE SPECIAL EDITION SCREENPLAY

Collect four differently numbered Free Screenplay tokens and post them with the application form (to be published tomorrow) together with three second-class stamps for postage to a UK address. Please allow 28 days for delivery. The closing date is March 14, 1998. The tale of Will Hunting was conceived by then Harvard student Matt Damon as a short story. When he showed it to his friend Ben Affleck they realised the story had the makings of a great movie.

THE TIMES FREE SCREENPLAY TOKEN 3

*A total of 12,500 tickets, distributed between the 72 cinemas listed, are available for this promotion. Tickets are strictly subject to availability and will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

GREAT BRITISH HOPES Rising stars in the arts firmament RACHEL SANDERS

Age: 28. Profession: Actress. Ripping yarn: Currently to be seen in the title role of *The Journey of Mary Kelly*, a new play by Sian Evans about the housemaid who became Jack The Ripper's last victim in 1888. Critical reaction? The *Times* critic Benedict Nightingale was "stirred and moved" by her passionate performance in Terry Hands's *Theat Cwytud* production, which continues in rep until Saturday and then moves to Pontardawe Arts Centre on March 18.



Art imitating life: "I have a slightly spooky connection with the play because Mary leaves Wales to go into service in London, just as my Welsh grandmother did." Previous credits? She has "somehow" ended up playing a string of emotionally tortured women: Mary Kelly, Lady Anne opposite David Troughton's Richard III with the RSC in 1995, and a repressed lesbian in Jed McKenna's *The Farmer's Bride*. A Shared Experience tour to Japan, Korea and Israel as a strait-jacketed Ariel was "less draining and gave me my first chance to see the world." Why did she choose acting? "Other than the fact that I always loved showing off as a child, I don't really know." Youth theatre in St Albans at 16 was followed by three years at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. Slow start: "The first few years after I graduated were very tough. But once I'd acquired an agent through my work with the Arts Threshold company, in Paddington, things picked up. I've not been out of work since the RSC season." What's the best part of the job? "Working on new plays, because you are the first people given the chance to bring the script to life. When you're rehearsing, there's a sense that nothing is right and nothing is wrong." Immediate ambition: "Moira Buffini, a friend of mine, has written a part for me in her new play, *Silence*, and it would be great if that were staged soon."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

THE TIMES DILLONS SCIENCE FORUM

The scientists and our future

FOUR OF THE WORLD'S leading scientists will debate with Melvyn Bragg "Why science matters" at a Times/Dillons forum. The forum, on March 5 at 8pm at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, marks the publication of the book, *On Giants' Shoulders - Great Scientists and their Discoveries from Archimedes to DNA* (Hodder & Stoughton, £12.99). The admission price of £10 (concs £7.50) includes £2 off the book.

WHY SCIENCE MATTERS
Please send me _____ tickets at £10 each (£7.50 concessions) for The Times/Dillons Science Forum on Thursday, March 5, at 8pm at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1

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سنة من العمل

If it feels good, then shoot it

Nothing stops today's young British film-makers, not even lack of finance and training. Nigel Cliff reports

Youthful, film-maker John McKay was listening to the radio four years ago when Robert Rodriguez came on air. Rodriguez is the man who sold his body for irrefutable expertise to raise the money to pay for his first feature film. *El Mariachi* cost \$7,000 and was mostly written in the medical centre, where Rodriguez also found his lead actor, much of the rest of his cast, several motorbikes and a dog. It went on to win garlands galore and launch the Hollywood career of its director.

‘If you want to make films, do it: there’s no excuse not to’

Listening to Rodriguez convinced McKay that he could do the same in Britain. He borrowed a camera from a friend, borrowed the friend to act as cameraman, and wrote a script around acquaintances he convinced to take part. The soundtrack came from his tape collection, and the on-set catering consisted of gallons of soup and stew cooked up by McKay before the shoot. The whole film — admittedly a short — was made for £100, and got McKay into the National Film and Television School. While he was there another of his film ideas was chosen for sponsorship by Whitbread. With the beer company's £15,000 he spent five days making a historical piece, *The Price*, and saw it tour Britain as part of the Stella Artis Movie Tour. Now McKay is about to direct a romantic comedy with a budget of £2.5 million. Not for nothing does the NETS's Verity Leves call him "a future industry leader".

McKay's story is remarkable, but by no means unusual. Every day, film crews are pounding the pavements of Britain, getting by on ingenuity, mutual help and an unshakable determination to make films. "There's been an absolute explosion within the past five years," says Kate Leys, head of development at Film 4, the film production arm of Channel 4. "This is partly a result of the greater availability of finance and partly the wider use of new technology and video, which makes cheap, quick filming possible. But McKay also sees a generational move at work. "All the people who used to be involved in fringe theatre or comedy are now directors, producers, writers," he says. "Film is the new fringe."

But are these do-it-yourself films any good? Leys puts between 20 and 25 projects into development each year; she receives about 100 proposals a week. A lot, she admits, are highly derivative, "waves of Tarantino-esque and sub-*Trainspotting* disasters, where style triumphs over substance and any notion of a story is completely forgotten." Roger Shannon, head of production at the British Film Institute, is able to fund six projects a year out of about 900 applicants. He agrees that the huge growth in grass-roots film-making does not necessarily imply an increase in quality. "A lot of people have a personal ambition to make a film," he says. "But only a few exceptional people have the ability to make a success of it."



Emma Scotson in the short film *The Price*, made by "future industry leader" John McKay, a prime example of the new breed of can-do directors

McKay believes there are now two separate film worlds: the "overground, overpaid" official film industry, and the "underground, underpaid" film scene of co-ops, film schools and societies, an "unofficial university that you can pass through". The two rarely meet, and he suggests that this is because different skills are needed: "If you succeed underground it's because you've persuaded your nan to do the catering and your brother to do the driving, but in the real industry those tricks aren't necessarily useful."

Clark was left with post-traumatic stress syndrome, and woke up for weeks afterwards shouting out instructions to his crew in the middle of the night. In the end, though, it was all (just about) worth it: the film was shown at festivals, in Channel 4's series *Shooting Gallery*, and got Clark an agent. In his wake, and that of the other members of the new breed of film-makers, more and more people want a piece of the action. Everyone seems to think, as Clark does, that if you want to be a director, the only way is to go out and do it: there's no excuse not to."

Leys is also concerned about the real level of demand by the film-going public. "I don't see crowds of people out there with placards demanding more British films," she says. "It scares me that an awful lot of things will get made that perhaps shouldn't, and that a market which is inherently very healthy will get squashed to death."

BRIEFLY NOTED

Starlight birthday

MUSICALS: Just a small party, nothing special. That will almost certainly not be said about Lord Lloyd-Webber's 50th birthday bash in the Albert Hall on April 7. The stars gathering to perform the maestro's music that night range from Boyzone and Donny Osmond to Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. Lloyd-Webber's cellist brother Julian, and a distinguished trio of Lloyd-Webber leading ladies: Sarah Brightman, Glenn Close and Elaine Paige. The evening will raise funds for one of the composer's pet interests, the National Youth Music Theatre, whose members will also be taking part.

THEATRE: Fiery Spanish missions come to Tyneside this May, as the Northern Stage company celebrates the centenary of the birth of Federico Garcia Lorca. The three-week festival at the Newcastle Playhouse, opening on May 18, has plays by Lorca (including the world premiere of his only screenplay, *Voyage to the Moon*), plays about him, screenings of films inspired by him (notably the British premiere of the Andy Garcia film, *The Disappearance of Garcia Lorca*), exhibitions, talks and even a full-blown academic conference, aptly titled *100 Years of Lorca: Poetry, Politics and Perversion*.

MUSIC: Not one farewell concert but a whole summer jamboree will mark the end of Sir Simon Rattle's 18-year reign as music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The series opens in characteristic style on July 17, when Rattle conducts an opera by a neglected 20th-century composer he has championed: Karol Szymanowski's *King Roger*, with the American baritone Thomas Hampson in the title role. Then Rattle commences an entire cycle of Beethoven symphonies, which will be repeated at the Salzburg Festival. Finally, on August Bank Holiday weekend, the maestro bows out in epic style with performances of Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*. His plans after that? A Sabbatical, he says.

NEW MUSIC: Michael Binyon on a concert rooted in earliest Christianity

A new sacred work by John Tavener will have its premiere in St Paul's Cathedral next Wednesday, bringing to Britain for the first time a choir from one of the oldest Christian churches in the world to sing in the language of Christ. The concert, to be held in the presence of the Prince of Wales, is already acquiring remarkable ecumenical significance. For it will unite oriental Christian communities that were split apart more than 1,500 years ago, and will remind the West that the Christian communities in Syria and the Near East are the closest living link to the early church founded after Christ's crucifixion.

Songs of praise from old rivals



John Tavener: his new work for the St Paul's concert unites singers from both Syrian and Greek traditions

The concert is part of an ambitious festival of Byzantine music that is to be held in London in the first week of March, and will bring to London ecclesiastical dignitaries from Alexandria and Damascus who are little known in this country. For it, a new work has been commissioned from Tavener, the foremost exponent in Britain of Orthodox music, whose haunting melodies performed during the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, have aroused enormous interest in Eastern church traditions. Preceding his new work, *The Last Discourse*, will be the chants and psalms used by the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, the only church still to hold services in Aramaic, the language predating Hebrew and Arabic that was the authentic language of Christ. In liturgical tradition it is now known as Syriac. Strictly speaking, this ancient and independent church predates Byzantine, and has kept its distance from the Greek-oriented churches ever since the Council of Chalcedon in 451. This fourth ecumenical Council was one of the defining gatherings of early Christianity. It brought together some 520 bishops from the entire Christian world to adjudicate in a dispute over the nature of Jesus between the rival theological schools of Antioch and Alexandria. The result was the alienation of believers in Syria and Egypt, leading to the first great schism in the Church. However, these ancient dif-

ferences will be put aside for the concert. Tavener and St Paul's have brought together singers from both Syrian and Greek traditions, helped by the British Embassy in Damascus which maintains a special religious affairs adviser who is on good terms with both patriarchs. Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, has been officially invited to Britain as a guest of the Government. A choir of seven men from Damascus will be joined by singers from the church community in Turkey and women choristers from Germany and Britain, so that the full-throated singing of 16 will echo through the cathedral, many of the Syrian Church's small community of 200 families in Britain will also be present and Yacoub Ghattas, senior deacon of the church in Britain, sees the concert as an unusual opportunity to bring together Christians from both traditions. Syriac tunes sound to the more familiar Gregorian chant and the rhythms of Middle Eastern music — which itself is derived from this liturgical tradition. The music is lighter and more varied than that made so popular in recent years by recordings of Gregorian chant. The Byzantine Festival is, however, a showcase for the Greek tradition, and follows a similar Greek Festival in 1989, which brought music, film

and theatre to London. The central focus this time will be on the literary works and travels of Manuel Palaiologos, the only Byzantine Emperor known to have visited Britain. A writer, thinker and statesman, he was the father of the last Byzantine Emperor Constantine, and toured Europe to raise support against the Ottoman Turks. He was regally entertained at Christmas 1400 by Henry IV in England, and, it is supposed, visited the church that then stood where St Paul's is now. Athanasios Angelou and Guy Protheroe, the festival's two artistic directors, have interpreted Byzantium in its broadest sense. There will be music, readings, literature and food from the whole world that once encompassed the Eastern Roman Empire and gradually shrank until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Lectures and exhibitions will look at the everyday lives of Byzantine subjects, their art and architecture, coinage, food and even health care — a world largely unknown in Britain. The principal patron is Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and others include the Greek Ambassador, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Gregorios of Britain, Sir Steven Runciman and, of course, Tavener, who has been a passionate musical exponent of Orthodoxy in Britain.

Protheroe did not anticipate the panoply of gorgeously robed ecclesiastical dignitaries who will be in St Paul's. But early on he won the support of Prince Charles, whose own interest in ecumenism will help to smooth the awkward protocol of the occasion. He is keenly awaiting the choir from Damascus, hoping that the political turbulence in the Middle East will not dampen the occasion. Aramaic — or Syriac — is still spoken in a few villages in Syria. The colourful and heretodox occasion may yet bring ecumenism closer to a region that has jealously guarded separate traditions since the dawn of Christianity. Tickets for the St Paul's concert are available by phone from the Barbican Centre (0171-638 8891).

Quality not quantity Emotion on hold

With ticket prices at more than twice the average for orchestral concerts in the Bridgewater Hall, and with Hindemith's Symphony in E flat occupying the first half of an obviously short programme, Riccardo Muti and the Vienna Philharmonic proved not to be the irresistible attraction they should have been. An overture would have made all the difference. The concert would have looked and sounded better, and the Josef Strauss encores would have been a genuine bonus rather than a makeweight. The fanfare at the beginning of the Hindemith symphony could in other circumstances have been a good start. But for an ensemble developed in a great hall like the Musikverein, the Bridgewater acoustic — as was immediately clear from the ill-focused brass sound — is not easy to deal with. It was only when the players were well into Brahms's Symphony in D in the second half that they realised that, whatever the

CONCERTS Vienna PO/Muti Manchester

sound on the platform, an orchestra must consciously play out into the auditorium here. So the Hindemith Symphony, a well written score but one not really worth writing, was little more than minimally rewarding. For all Muti's well organised advocacy, and in spite of some beautifully played flute and oboe solos, the orchestra seemed not to be enjoying the Hindemith mannerisms very much either. Certainly, it enjoyed the Brahms more. Here at last was an opportunity to luxuriate in the Vienna sound and indeed, the quiet opening, with finely balanced lower strings and horns and perfectly tuned woodwind, was magical. The problem now, however, was that the conductor seemed not to be projecting his interpretation so much as discreetly presiding over the orchestra's

experience of it. Was it he or Viennese tradition that supplied four each of woodwind instruments when Brahms requires only two? The extras were confined mainly to the louder tutti passages, it is true, but they had a coarsening effect even here. And who prescribed that in some of those passages there should be, say, four each of oboes and bassoons but only three each of flutes and clarinets? Somebody with a better ear than Brahms, obviously. The quadruple woodwind were still on the platform when, after prolonged applause and some teasing from the maestro, it was time for the Strauss encores. But, out of respect for a great composer no doubt, the extras were not required to join in. The polkas were delightfully done, particularly the *Frauenwilde* polka-mazurka, which thrived on the kind of spontaneous exchange between conductor and orchestra that would have been welcome earlier.

GERALD LARNER

Supertosh superbly done

Gordano's opera is an odd choice for the Royal Opera-in-exile's concert series. There are about four minutes of music out of its two hours that anyone sane would want to listen to simply as music. The rest is time-filling bustle and empty rhetoric accompanying a dourly complicated plot, and the sort of ecstatic sentimentality and cardboard characterisation that make *The Scarlet Pimpernel* look like the work of Dostoevsky — it needs lavish stage action to make any effect at all. And even those four minutes depend for their effect almost entirely on huge voices deployed double fortissimo. Chénier is the most frightful tosh, the sort of thing that gives opera a bad name. Phew, I feel better now, and all of which having been said, Monday's performance was in every respect superb. Richard Armstrong, who has conducted the piece at Covent

Andrea Chénier Festival Hall

Garden, galvanised orchestra, chorus and soloists into a reading of such commitment and discipline as almost to persuade one that this was a score worth listening to. And the voices were certainly there. The Argentinian José Cura is indeed the "fourth tenor", as his previous appearances with the company — *Corsaro*, *Samson et Dalila* — have already indicated. Tirelessly robust tone, heroic delivery, even plangent lyricism in the 30-odd seconds where it is required — all are on tap. He also has one or two traditional, rather endearing tenorial mannerisms, like tying one phrase to the next to show off his breath control, and approaching top notes via a springboard about a third down, then hitting the target with ejaculatory triumph.

The audience went wild. Maria Guleghina has similar natural gifts — opulent sound, a real sense of line, and bags of personality, indeed almost too much in the way of flashing eyes and caliginous demeanour for the shrinking violet that is Maddalena. That fastidious musician Anthony Michaels-Moore lavished his art on the pasticheboard role of Gérard, a waste, honestly, but it was good to learn from the programme that he is about to tackle Rigoletto. A classy supporting cast — Leah-Anne-Marie Owens, Leah-Marie Jones among them — and Roderick gave their all, and Roderick Earle risked a lot in preempting applause for Cura's Act IV aria by entering somewhat precipitately with his off-stage *Marsellaise*. There is a repeat performance on Friday, and if you like this sort of thing, then you will like this sort of thing.

RODNEY MILNES

WINNERS of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition have an unfortunate tendency to disappear from the limelight almost as quickly as they enter it, rather like Van Cliburn himself, in fact. It is early days yet for the Californian Jon Nakamatsu, who has been busy since becoming last summer's laureate, but on the evidence of this very competent Queen Elizabeth Hall recital he lacks the special qualities to stand out in a crowded field. At least he does not share the piano-bashing traits of many previous Van Cliburn winners. In this well-balanced programme of works from the Romantic tradition he showed himself capable of some quite gentle playing, but he also had a limited variety of colour and pianistic tone at his command: all four works were covered by the same dull sound, and the individual characteristics of each composer were blurred. Nakamatsu opened his recital — and the spring season of the Harrods International Piano Series — with Harold Bauer's transcription of the Franck *Prélude, Fugue et Variation*, a piece of more subtlety than its origins as an organ work might suggest. Yet the wistful opening was lumpy and the fugue heavy; only the closing bars had delicacy. After an unsettled start in Brahms's early C major Sonata, Nakamatsu gave a curiously anonymous performance that missed the work's nostalgic lyricism. Schumann ought to have provided both the satisfying link and contrast with Brahms, but by the second half of the evening the shortage of real magic was felt. This *Carnaval* was Schumann without poetry, a lost cause. Though Nakamatsu seemed more at home with the lyricism of the opening of Chopin's *Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise Brillante*, the second part was disappointingly unshowy. Something is wrong when a performance of this work does not take one's breath away.

JOHN ALLISON

scientists our future



Cool heat in the Big Easy

New Orleans, the cradle of jazz, is still giving birth to some bouncing baby talents. Alyn Shipton reports



Nicholas Payton, native of New Orleans and star of this year's Mardi Gras extravaganza

As Mardi Gras in New Orleans works itself up to its climax, the heart of the old city buzzes with a week-long hubbub of street parades. Each night, thousands of people pack Canal Street, shouting and screaming as gaudy trinkets are flung from the processions into the sea of faces.

With so many tourist dollars about, some of the best jazz of the year is on offer, including traditional New Orleans music from the band led by 87-year-old Lionel Ferris at the Palm Court Café, where grizzled veterans and a sprinkling of younger disciples recreate the genteel sounds of early jazz.

Music is a line passed from person to person

The number of such experienced old hands has been dwindling for some time, but right now New Orleans jazz is undergoing a remarkable renaissance. The heart of the movement is the Snug Harbor Club, which for 18 years has unwaveringly presented modern jazz. Central to its success is pianist Ellis Marsalis, the most famous father in jazz history, who plays every week at the club, and who teaches on the educational schemes that draw aspiring musicians to the city.

Through his programmes at the New Orleans Centre for Creative Arts and at the University of New Orleans, as well as his appearances here, Ellis has legitimised our jazz, says club owner George Brumit. "His courses have been send-off points for a generation of remarkable musicians, and this club provided the venue for many of their first public appearances."

Nicholas Payton, the young trumpeter signed to Verve, first appeared here when he was 15 or 16. Harry Connick Jr started out here. What the majority of these genuine movers forward in jazz find, drawing on the richness of the local tradition.

Payton, one of the stellar THE TWO all-star outfits featured in this stunning, rapturously received double CD, has more than guitarist Bill Frisell; each also had to establish a method of sustaining the music without a conventional rhythm section. For Kenny Wheeler, Lee Konitz, Dave Holland and Frisell, the challenge was to be locally rhythmic given that all four are peerless soloists, someone had to keep the beat steady in the absence of a drummer while Wheeler's intensely lyrical compositions were being subjected to improvisational scrutiny.

For the Paul Motian Trio, in which the drummer-leader and Frisell are joined by tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano, the challenge was, by contrast, essentially a melodic one: to keep the theme present in the music as unobtrusively as possible while the soloists were extemporising upon it.

also be called upon to assist Holland in the latter's rhythm-section duties, cooing alternately swooning and choked chords from his guitar as well as his trademark eccentrically spangly runs.

As a result of this beautifully understated co-operation between Holland and Frisell, Wheeler and Konitz were free to explore the many delicate delights of the Canadian trumpeter's compositions, which

the conductor gave the down beat. I played and then this great massive sound of a student orchestra came in behind me. It was really impressive."

Jason, whose band includes yet another talented composer and band leader in his own right, the bassist Roland Guerin, puts the revival in New Orleans jazz down to the presence in the city of major musical talents across all styles, drawn there by the ready source of work. His fellow Snug Harbor regular, the St Louis-born pianist Peter Martin, offers a broader outsider's perspective: "The city's music still has an identifiable character. There's an organic flow between the music and musicians. Beyond just liveliness, the music is a line passed from person to person across the generations, like no other place I've ever been. Although

it's the birthplace of jazz, musicians don't treat it like a museum — it's a living thing. Kids learn jazz on the streets, get their experience playing in parades. The quality of their musicianship is amazing, a constant inspiration."

The best of Mardi Gras week at Snug Harbor, with Clarence Johnson III, Peter Martin, Nicholas Payton and Jason Marsalis, will be broadcast in Impressions on Radio 5 on March 21

CHRIS PARKER

LONDON

CHAMBER MUSIC: One of the world's finest string ensembles, the Alban Berg Quartet, brings its velvety touch to Haydn's String Quartet in D and Bartók's String Quartet No 2. These are followed by Brahms's Clarinet Quintet in B minor, with Sabine Meyer as soloist. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, SE1 (0171 360 4263). Tonight, 7.45pm.

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargre

MANAN'S GROSSE FUGA, performed to the music of Beethoven. The evening concludes with MacMillan's humorous *Five Synagogues* with reggae music by Scott Joplin et al. Hippodrome, Hurst Street, (0121-622 7488). Tonight-Sat, 7.30pm; mat Sat, 2.30pm.

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM: Birmingham Royal Ballet opens its new season with a record-breaking three consecutive works created in the early 1970s. Opening proceedings in Balanchine's *Symphony in Three Movements*, set to music by Stravinsky, followed by Hans von

THEATRE GUIDE

Jerome Kragger's assessment of the theatre showing in London
■ **House full, returns only**
■ **Some seats available**
■ **Seats at all prices**

PRODUCTIONS

Susan Stacey sings the role of the innkeeper Leonora, with Geraldine Ferris as her equally experienced husband. Andrew Greenwood conducts. Alhambra, with Ross's La Cenerentola. Arts Theatre, 6 St Edward's Passage (01223 50333). Fidelity: Tonight and Fri, 7.30pm, Cenerentola: Tomorrow and Sat, 7.30pm.

LONDON GALLERIES

Anneli Jada Fine Art: Anthony Caro — New Sculptures (0171-629 7878). British Museum: Picasso, Rodin and the 19th Century (0171-323 8229). Hayward: Francis Bacon: The Human Body. Usher Gallery: Robert Rauschenberg. Usher Gallery, 100 Broad Street, Weymouth, Dorset (01305 37239).

NEW RELEASES

ALL OVER ME: Wonderfully lush and coming-of-age story, with Alison Folland as the teenager exploring her sexuality. Director: Alan Smithee. (0171-928 3232)

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and where to see them (where indicated with the symbol Φ) on release across the country

ART GALLERIES

PARKIN GALLERY 6 March in the Shrine of the Butterfly Whisker & Water Games 11 Malcolm St SW1, Mon-Fri 10am-5pm tel 238144

DANCE

Bedler's Walls at the Peacock Theatre (0171) 314 8800
CAMPANAS FLAMENCAS Hot-blooded Spanish talents TO UCL Sunday 6 March

THEATRES

APOLLO 24hr (0171) 464 5070
COMEDY THEATRE 397 1731
DOUGLAS 0171 464 5454
DOCTOR DOILEY 0171 416 5075

POP/ROCK

APOLLO LABATYS 0171 464 5070
DOUGLAS 0171 464 5454
DOCTOR DOILEY 0171 416 5075

THEATRES

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298,000 readers of this section go to the theatre at least once every 2/3 months. To advertise in The Times theatre listings please call our sales team on 0171 680 6222 or fax 0171 481 9313. All major credit cards accepted.

TONSLEY... home... [Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page with various text and graphics]

Handwritten note in the top right corner.

TO ADVERTISE CALL: 0171 481 1986 (TRADE) 0171 481 4000 (PRIVATE)

PROPERTY

FAX: 0171 782 7828 (TRADE) 0171 782 7799 (PRIVATE)

NORTH OF THE THAMES

Various property listings under 'NORTH OF THE THAMES' including descriptions of houses and flats.

BELGRAVIA

Property listings in the Belgravia area.

CITY & WEST END

Property listings in the City and West End.

CITY DOCKLANDS & EAST

Property listings in the City Docklands and East.

CITY DOCKLANDS & EAST

Property listings in the City Docklands and East.

CITY DOCKLANDS & EAST

Property listings in the City Docklands and East.

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Property listings in the City Docklands and East.

CITY DOCKLANDS & EAST

Property listings in the City Docklands and East.

SOUTH OF THE THAMES

Various property listings under 'SOUTH OF THE THAMES'.

SOUTH OF THE THAMES

Property listings in the South of the Thames.

SOUTH OF THE THAMES

Property listings in the South of the Thames.

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Property listings in the South of the Thames.

SOUTH OF THE THAMES

Property listings in the South of the Thames.

GO WEST! advertisement for properties in Action Town, London W3. Features images of buildings and text: 'Convenient, Accessible, Affordable, Available.' Includes contact information for St. George.

Bewley Homes advertisement for 'Quality Homes of Distinction'. Features images of houses and text for 'SWAN COURT', 'SHERBORNE FIELDS', and 'FARNELL MEWS'. Includes contact details for sales offices.

FULHAM SW6 property listing: 3 beds, 200 sqm, 140 sqm garden. £350,000. Tel: 0181 948 0421

TONSLEY property listing: 3 beds terrace house. £240,000. Tel: 0181 3331488

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

NEW HOMES

Fairclough Homes advertisement: 'At home with Quality'. Features a large image of a house and text describing the company's commitment to quality and customer service. Includes contact information for various regional offices.

Right of audience in chambers

Effect of coup on bank account

In re H-S (Minors) (Chambers proceedings: Right of audience)

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Swinton Thomas and Lord Justice Mummery
[Judgment February 11]
In entitling an individual who met its criteria to a right of audience in chambers, section 27(3)(e) of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 was expressed in broad terms and conferred no discretion on the court.

Where, therefore, the applicant, who had no legal qualifications, was employed by a solicitor to assist in providing services to clients, usually men, involved in family litigation, and was instructed by the solicitor to represent a client in proceedings in chambers, he fell within the ambit of section 27(3)(e) and was entitled to exercise a right of audience at the hearing.

The Court of Appeal so held when granting the applicant, Dr Michael Pelling, leave to appeal and to adduce new evidence and allowing his appeal from Judge Hallon, sitting in chambers as a High Court judge, who had refused to let him represent as an advocate a client of the firm, Bance & Co, in contact proceedings relating to two young children.

Section 27 of the 1990 Act provides:
"(2) A person shall have a right of audience before a court in relation to any proceedings only in the following cases—
(a) where he is employed... to assist in the conduct of litigation and is doing so under instructions given... by a qualified litigator; and
(b) the proceedings are being heard in chambers in the High Court...
Dr Pelling in person.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE referred to the facts established by the evidence of Dr Pelling and of Mr Bance:

1 Mr Bance was a full-time employed solicitor who also conducted some private practice from a room in his home, used as an office, with no staff, other than Dr Pelling and no client account. When he instructed counsel he sought to prevent a retainer arising and accepted no personal responsibility for counsel's fees, which were paid in advance.
2 Dr Pelling had no formal legal education or training although he had spent much effort over a number of years in educating himself in the law and in litigating on behalf of himself and others.
3 Both Mr Bance and Dr Pelling, largely as a result of personal experience, were driven by a common and strongly held belief that, on the break up of marriage and the consequent disruption of families, fathers often received prejudicial treatment in the courts and were ill-served by their solicitors.
4 Both had close links with Families Need Fathers, a charitable body which sought to assist fathers confronting problems resulting from family break up.
5 Dr Pelling, who had described himself as a solicitor's managing clerk, made a practice of introducing such fathers to Bance & Co which then acted for them, although the firm had some other clients.
6 The firm provided services on a semi pro bono basis, charging an hourly rate which ranged from nil to £30. Dr Pelling's services being used and remunerated by the firm

ordinarily at the rate of £20 an hour, less tax and national insurance.

7 Dr Pelling introduced the present client, the paternal grandmother of the two children the subject of the contact proceedings in which the firm also acted for the father. Dr Pelling was instructed by the firm to represent her at the hearing. She was not to be charged separately for services to her, and Dr Pelling was to receive his hourly rate as the firm's representative, instructing counsel for the father.

His Lordship said that section 17(1) and (2) of the 1990 Act set out the statutory objective to widen the field of those authorised to provide legal services.
Section 17(3) and (4) then set out the general principle which was directed to ensuring that rights of audience and to conduct litigation were extended only to those who were fitted by education and training to exercise such rights, and who were subject to appropriate codes of conduct.

The plain object of section 27(2)(e) was to preserve the traditional right of solicitors' managing clerks to conduct proceedings in chambers on behalf of the solicitors who employed them.
Such clerks were traditionally men and women of great experience, often members of the Institute of Legal Executives. They could be relied on to observe the same principles of detachment, objectivity and professional duty as a qualified solicitor or barrister.

The situation disclosed in the present case was a far cry from that. Dr Pelling was not in any ordinary sense a managing clerk, he lacked qualifications and experience. Mr Bance plainly was a qualified litigator within the

meaning of the Act, but he conducted a practice of an unusual nature.

It appeared that in no ordinary sense was Dr Pelling acting under instructions given by Mr Bance: it was plainly in large measure his own advice that clients valued.

Dr Pelling had submitted that while some subsections of section 27 conferred a discretion on the court, section 27(2)(e) did not: that it was a statement of conditions which, if met, entitled an individual to a right of audience in chambers.

That construction seemed to fly in the face of the general principle expressed in section 17 of the Act by extending rights of audience to an advocate subject to none of the usual constraints which bound an advocate employed or engaged by a solicitor and acting under his instructions in the ordinary way.
If the matter were one of discretion, his Lordship would not exercise it in Dr Pelling's favour. However, section 27(2)(e) called for no exercise of discretion by the court and it was impossible to say that Dr Pelling fell outside the broadly expressed language of the subsection.

His Lordship concluded, with considerable reluctance, that the court had no alternative but to allow the appeal and order that the matter be remitted to the judge with a direction to permit Dr Pelling, if so advised, to make relevant submissions on the grandmother's behalf in chambers.

If any issue arose under section 27(4) it could be raised then.

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas delivered a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Mummery agreed.

Sierra Leone Telecommunications Co Ltd v Barclays Bank plc

Before Mr Justice Cresswell
[Judgment February 6]
An international bank holding a bank account in the United Kingdom for a foreign company wholly owned by the government of that country was not obliged to give effect to a purported variation of mandate changing the account's authorised signatories communicated by directors purportedly appointed by a new government which had attained power by military coup, and which was not the constitutional government of that country nor recognised as such by the British government.

The directors, not being appointed by a government of state as required by the company's articles of association, were invalidly appointed and the original mandate stood.
The bank acknowledged that it had effectively been asked by the original signatories to make a difficult choice, whether to ignore completely the letter of December 22, 1997 addressed to Barclays from the head office of Sierra, or to respond to any of the payment requests made by the original signatories.

As to the question of the law governing the contract between Sierra and the bank, his Lordship reviewed the relevant authorities which established that it was the law of the country where the account was kept which governed the contract.

The governing law of contract between Sierra and the bank was thus English law. However, it was the law of Sierra Leone which determined who were Sierra's officials authorised to act on its behalf. His Lordship then considered whether the new board of directors had been appointed by the government of Sierra Leone, and whether its purported acts were accordingly valid. Under Sierra's articles of association only the government of Sierra Leone was able to appoint the directors.

Further, section 70 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone provided that the appointment of directors of all parastatals had to be made by the President and approved by Parliament.

It was the evidence of Mr Solomon Berewa, the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice in President Kabbah's government, that the junta had not lawfully set aside or revised the constitution itself.

His Lordship referred to Republic of Somalia v Woodhouse Drake and Carey (Suisse) SA and Others (The Mary) [1993] QB 54, in which Lord Justice Hobhouse set out the factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a government existed as a government of state.
Those factors included:
1 Whether it was the constitutional government of the state and whether her Majesty's Government had dealings with it;
2 The degree, nature and stability of administrative control, if any, that it itself exercised over the territory of the state;
3 The extent of international recognition that it had as the govern-

ment of the state.
His Lordship considered those factors in turn. The evidence showed:

1 That it was the British government's policy to continue to deal with the democratically elected government of Sierra Leone under President Kabbah and to have no dealings with the military junta in Freetown whose coup it had consistently condemned;
2 That the military junta had no control whatsoever over the country outside Freetown and there were civil unrest problems in Freetown;
3 That a United Nations resolution imposing sanctions relating to the supply of arms and petroleum products to Sierra Leone had been enacted in the United Kingdom by various statutory instruments. In addition the coup had been condemned by the Commonwealth, the Organisation of African Unity and the European Community.

His Lordship concluded that the military junta was not the government of Sierra Leone. The mandate dated to the bank of July 31, 1996 stood. Nothing that the military junta had purported to do since May 1997 affected that mandate.

The letter of December 22, 1997 from those associated with the junta to the bank was of no effect. The new directors of Sierra were not validly appointed. It followed that the plaintiff was entitled to the declaration sought.

Solicitors: Stephenson Harwood; Lovell White Durrant.

Acquiescence to error does not create an agreement

Schuldenfrei v Hilton (Inspector of Taxes)
Before Mr Justice Neuberger
[Judgment February 10]
An amended notice of assessment reducing a capital gains tax assessment to nil issued by a tax inspector in error and which the taxpayer did not dispute, did not constitute an agreement for the purposes of section 54 of the Taxes Management Act 1970.

Mr Justice Neuberger so held in the Chancery Division dismissing an appeal by the taxpayer, Mr Heinz Schuldenfrei, from a determination by special commissioners that his appeal against the original assessment on chargeable gains of £3.4 million for 1987-88 was not to be treated as discharged by an agreement.

Section 54 of the 1970 Act provides:
"11 Where a person gives notice of appeal and, before the appeal is determined by the commissioners, the inspector... and the appellant come to an

agreement, whether in writing or otherwise, that the assessment or decision under appeal should be treated as upheld without variation, or as varied in a particular manner or as discharged or cancelled, the like consequences shall ensue for all purposes as would have ensued, if, at the time when the agreement was made, the commissioners had determined the appeal."

Mr Robert Venables QC, Mr Peter Sheridan QC and Ms Amanda Hardy for the taxpayer; Mr Timothy Brennan for the Crown.

MR JUSTICE NEUBERGER said that in 1988 the taxpayer, having made capital gains from share transactions, was issued with an estimated assessment to tax. He appealed against the assessment but made payments towards discharging any liability.

Following correspondence between the parties, in May 1993, the inspector erroneously issued an amended notice of assessment for

1987-88 in a nil amount and in respect of which the taxpayer took no action. In November 1993 the inspector wrote advising the taxpayer that the amended assessment had been issued by mistake.
In a letter of January 7, 1994, Mr Justice Neuberger had said in relation to section 54 that there was "no reason why the ordinary law of contract should not apply" to an agreement. Assuming the 1993 notice was a sufficient offer, the taxpayer's inactivity in response to it could not constitute acceptance of an offer.

As to whether the assessment was an offer, for the taxpayer it was said it was not then it had no purpose. However, the wording of the 1993 notice of assessment was recording something as having happened rather than as seeking an agreement. It was not an offer for section 54 purposes. The determination of the commissioners was correct.

Solicitors: Lipkin Gorman; Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

Determining appeal without a hearing

Regina v Immigration Appeal Tribunal, Ex parte S
Before Mr Justice Sullivan
[Judgment February 9]

When considering whether to determine an appeal without a hearing, a special adjudicator had to consider the material before him, the nature of the issues raised before him and the extent to which any directions given had been complied with, in accordance with rule 35(1)(e) of the Asylum Appeals (Procedure) Rules (SI 1990 No 2070) (L).
Failure to comply with directions was not on its own enough to determine an appeal without a hearing where the material raised issues which could only be determined by a hearing.
Mr Justice Sullivan so held in the Queen's Bench Division when granting the application of S to quash the refusal of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal dated June

26, 1997, to grant him leave to appeal against the dismissal by a special adjudicator, dated June 13, 1997 of his appeal from the rejection by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated March 6, 1995, of S's application for asylum.

Mr Peter Duffy, QC and Mr Ramby de Melio for S; Mr Patrick Elias, QC and Mr Robin Tam for the Immigration Appeal Tribunal.

MR JUSTICE SULLIVAN said that when considering disposing of an appeal without a hearing, a special adjudicator had to consider the factors in rule 35(1)(e) conjunctively, and then only to dispose of the appeal when it would be just to do so.

The applicant arrived in the United Kingdom on January 13, 1994 and immediately claimed asylum, which was refused by the Home Secretary on March 6, 1995. The applicant appealed to a special

adjudicator and the appeal was dismissed on July 27, 1996.

The applicant's subsequent appeal was heard by the Immigration Appeal Tribunal on September 23, 1996 and it remitted the case de novo to another special adjudicator. The matter was listed for December 23, 1996 but was adjourned with the special adjudicator handing down directions under rule 23 of the 1996 Rules. On February 7, 1997 the matter was again adjourned with the directions previously ordered being repeated.

On May 25, 1997 the applicant attended the appeal hearing with counsel. The directions previously set down had not been carried out and the special adjudicator disposed of the appeal without hearing from the applicant or counsel under rules 24(1)(c) and 35(1)(e) of the 1996 Rules.

His Lordship said that where, as here, the central issue of an appeal

was one of credibility and the applicant was present and willing to give evidence, it was rare to dispose of the appeal without hearing from the witness.

However, where the failure to comply with directions had been persistent and gross and to the prejudice of the prosecution the special adjudicator could justly dispense with a hearing.
The special adjudicator had to determine the case as a whole in a common sense manner and where the applicant was present at the appeal it was draconian to proceed without a hearing.

If a special adjudicator decided to dispense with a case he had to give a concise statement in accordance with rule 23(b) of the 1996 Rules, giving reasons why he had come to that decision, with reference to the factors listed in rule 35(1)(e).

Solicitors: Gill & Co. Bloomsbury; Treasury Solicitor.

PROPERTY

Advertisement for property services including 'TO ADVERTISE CALL: 0171 481 1986 (TRADE) 0171 481 4000 (PRIVATE)'. Lists various property listings across different regions like Dulwich, Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Bristol, Berkshire, Cotswolds, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, London Rentals, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Isle of Man, Bedfordshire, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire, and Wales. Includes contact information for F.P.D.S. Savills.

Advertisement for 'Club of' featuring a large image of a woman's face and the text 'club of House has been reser...'. Includes a large phone number 'CALL 0800 378278' and mentions 'SASH WINDOWS NEED RENOVATING AND UPGRADING?'.

The rapidly growing merger culture may slow the pace of the property boom in London, says Casilda Grigg

The City has caught a cold and the Central London property market is beginning to sneeze.

Few will put their names to their fears, but one employee for Union Bank of Switzerland's (UBS) London office is typical.

Many companies believe that they are too small to stay in the game unless they join forces and turn themselves into global players.

Those who may lose their jobs are often the middle-ranking employees on high but not outrageous salaries of between £50,000 and £100,000 a year who underpin much of London's market.

As well as the emergence of what could be termed the "mega-bank", the crisis in Asia has had a huge impact on world banking.



Michael Douglas and Charlie Sheen in Wall Street typify the high-spending City image, but the gloss is now tarnished by turmoil in the markets

City's whiz-kids lose that spending sparkle

Asia accounts for a third of world trade and many City banks are feeling bruised by the scale of their losses there.

Sympathy for one of Britain's least-loved professions may be small, but the changes sweeping the City are not just about pampered yuppies walking up to the prospect of learning to live like the rest of the population.

The impact that this vast money machine has on the economy as a whole is colossal. If thousands of City bankers feel financially vulnerable, reverberations will be felt by a host of other workers.

Of these, estate agents are among the first to sense any ripples emanating from the Square Mile. "Our market is inextricably bound up with what's going on in the City," says Louise Egerton of the agency.

Nicola Hortick's house in The Little Boltons for £4 million, has no illusions about this year's change of tempo.

"Last year," she says, "we had sealed bids, ghostly gazumping situations and as many as eight people chasing one property. This year, people aren't rushing to buy. Loss of confidence in the City affects the property market.

Her observations are shared by many agents. Simon Agace, the chairman of Winkworth, says: "City buyers are looking at a lot more property. City sentiment isn't

going ho for property or stocks, and people are being more cautious."

Jolyon Coombes, a director of Jackson-Stopp & Staff, reckons that this year's City househunters are unlikely to buy at their upper limit. "People are not going for the full money on their potential to raise a mortgage," he says.

Some pockets of London may remain immune. Peter Young of John D. Wood, says: "There's a strong demand for family houses in Kensington. If it's a handsome house,

there is plenty of demand."

Mr Ellingworth believes that "secondary" areas such as Docklands, which have attracted a lot of Asian buyers, will be harder-hit.

But although estate agents predict that house prices will go up, many of them are not expecting the dramatic rises of previous years.

Lorna Vestey, a partner at Knight Frank, predicts that property prices will go up by 5 per cent compared with 25 per cent in 1997, while Richard Donnell of Savills expects "strong growth", but "not at the level we've seen in the previous five years".

Scandal of the empty homes

Adam Barnard looks into unwanted council houses

MORE and more council homes are standing empty at taxpayers' expense, according to new figures on empty homes in England.

Council housing vacancies have risen from 1.9 per cent of stock in 1992 to 2.7 per cent. A total of 108,000 homes in the social housing sector are empty, an increase of about 5,000 on last year's figures.

The findings are based on a survey of empty properties by the Empty Homes Agency, a charity that lobbies to get vacant housing back into use.

Bob Lawrence, the agency's chief executive, says that the main cause of the higher figures has been changes in industry. "This increase, which is certainly more resources, they can do more to improve stock," says Mr Lawrence.

The overall number of vacant properties in the country has fallen from 572,000 when the agency was set up five years ago, in 1993, to 417,000. Mr Lawrence attributes this to the housing market moving faster and the success of empty property strategies.

rental sector has also had a damaging effect. Mr Lawrence says: "People prefer small houses with a garden, even if the house is in poor condition. Sheltered housing from the 1960s and 1970s and high-rise blocks are being left vacant."

In Leeds, the council plans to knock down several hundred empty homes. An official says: "These are flats and houses which are difficult to let, either because of the area they are in or because of their condition."

Things may improve, however. The Government has implemented proposals to release more proceeds from housing sales to councils. "If the councils have more resources, they can do more to improve stock," says Mr Lawrence.

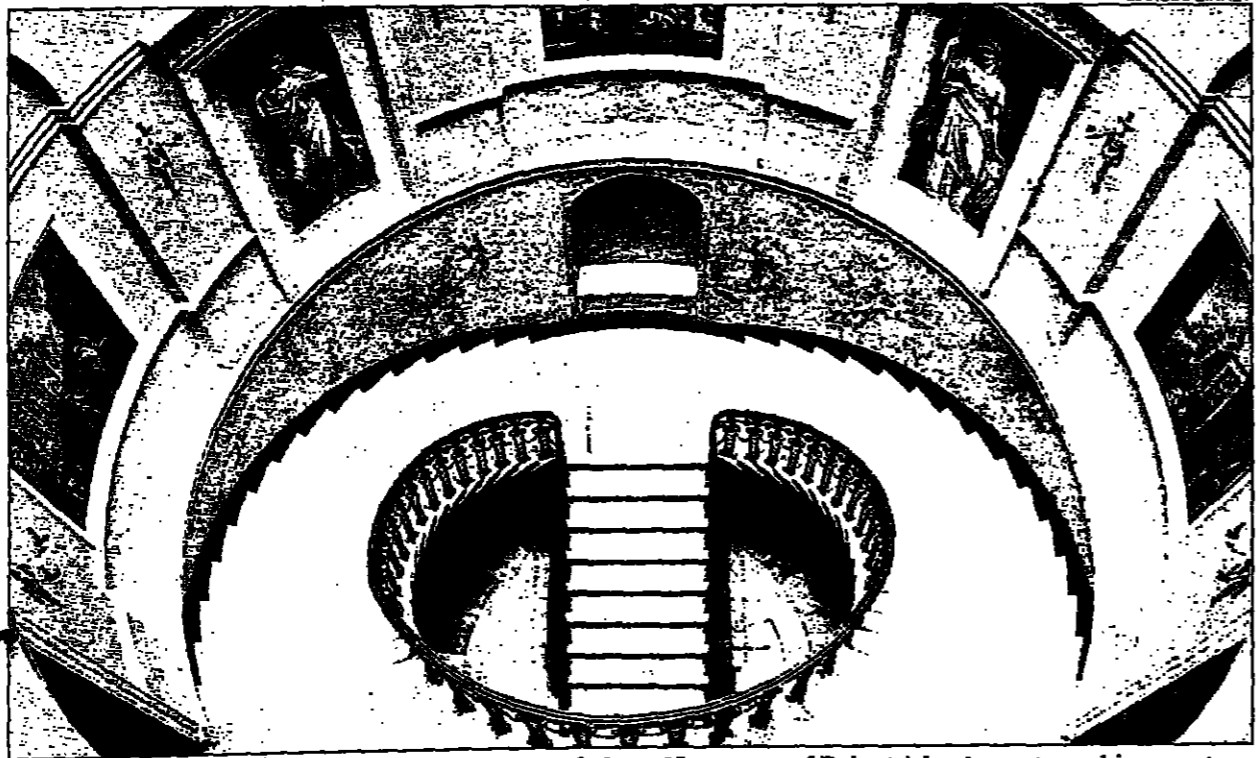
The overall number of vacant properties in the country has fallen from 572,000 when the agency was set up five years ago, in 1993, to 417,000. Mr Lawrence attributes this to the housing market moving faster and the success of empty property strategies.

The agency is calling for changes to VAT laws to encourage homeowners in bringing empty homes back into use.

Under current laws, VAT is waived for people building new homes, but charged on those repairing wasted housing stock. Mr Lawrence comments: "This law means that there is an incentive to build on green-field land rather than to repair existing homes."

A spokesman for the Department of Environment says: "We have been considering how economic measures might help the planning process for future housing."

0171 782 7821
0171 782 7799



Back to its old self: the central circular staircase of Home House, one of Robert Adam's greatest achievements

A club of great history

Home House has been rescued from dereliction, reports Rachel Kelly

One of Robert Adam's most famous town houses is to be turned into a private members' club and is expected to open this autumn.

The 200-year-old house has been derelict for three years. Its transformation is promised by Brian Clivaz, once the manager of Simpsons in the Strand, who is in charge of the £12 million refurbishment.

"I envisage the club as a cross between the Garrick and the Groucho," Mr Clivaz says. "This proves that private enterprise, working closely with English Heritage and the local council, can come up with an imaginative scheme to restore an important building with a commercially viable future."

Grade I listed house to be restored and converted into Mr Clivaz's private members club in September 1996. He and the architects, Feilden and Mawson, have worked closely with the Parliamentary Heritage Committee, the council, English Heritage and the Georgian Group.

When finished, Home House will have an 80-seat restaurant, the great drawing room, music room, Ercuis can bar and smoking room, private dining rooms for up to 100 guests, a secluded walled garden, 12 double bedrooms and six suites with 24-hour room and valet service.

There will be a house spa, with a sauna, gym, Turkish bath, aromatherapy, reflexology and sunbathing. Cigar smokers and chess players will be welcomed among the women membership. The club also plans to capitalise on one of the building's most notorious

former inhabitants: Anthony Blunt the spy. Built between 1772 and 1777, when the Scottish architect dominated the fashionable London scene, Home was designed for parties and is one of Adam's greatest achievements.

The house was built for lavish parties. Now worth about £10 million, the house later became the home of Samuel Courtauld, the textile magnate, who gave it to the University of London. It, in turn, established the Courtauld Institute for the teaching of art history in 1931.

Hume's heavily plastered and decorated rooms housed a magnificent art collection, including paintings by Renoir, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne and Gainsborough. Yet since the institute moved to the larger Spencer house in 1990, the building

has been empty. In the early 1990s, the National Trust had considered taking over the house as its headquarters. It had planned to take out a 99-year lease to restore and manage the house, which the trust would have used for corporate entertaining and would have furnished with a collection before opening it to the public.

But talks broke down between Viscount Purman, whose family owns the building's freehold, and the trust when details of money, maintenance and nearby building reforms could not be agreed.

Additional research by Paul Taylor.

CORRECTION

ENTERGY's Mayfair property (Homes, February 18) is for the use of non-UK employees of that company and not its London employees or those of its subsidiary, London Electricity.

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION THE TIMES

WIN A FERRARI

Enter Fantasy Formula One and you could win a classic Ferrari 528 GTB. This dream machine has a top speed of 155mph and does 0-100 in 6.6 secs. Second prize is a trip for two to the 1998 Australian Grand Prix. Third prize is a trip for two to the 1998 Monaco Grand Prix. Plus, entries received before midnight on Friday February 27 will go into a pre-season prize draw for the chance to win a trip to this year's Australian Grand Prix on March 8, or one of 10 Formula One CD-Rom games.

MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW

DRIVERS			
GROUP A			
01 Damon Hill	07 Heinz-Harald Frentzen		
02 Michael Schumacher	08 Eddie Irvine		
03 David Coulthard	09 Mika Hakkinen		
04 Giancarlo Fisichella	10 Jean Alesi		
05 Jacques Villeneuve	11 Rubens Barrichello		
06 Olivier Panis			
GROUP B			
12 Alexander Wurz	18 Jan Magnussen		
13 Ralf Schumacher	19 Toranosuke Takagi		
14 Jarno Trulli	20 Ricardo Rosset		
15 Johnny Herbert	21 Shinji Nakano		
16 Mika Salo	22 Esteban Tuero		
17 Pedro Diniz			
CONSTRUCTORS			
GROUP C			
23 Williams	26 McLaren	29 Sauber	32 Tyrrell
24 Ferrari	27 Jordan	30 Arrows	33 Minardi
25 Benetton	28 Prost	31 Stewart	
GROUP D			

THE TIMES FANTASY FORMULA ONE ENTRY FORM

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I have read and accept the rules and wish to enter the Fantasy Formula One game.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

RACING

Balding hits out at BBC's 'arrogant' attitude

BY CHRIS McGRATH

MANY people considering the appointment of Clare Balding as BBC television's new racing presenter to represent a breath of fresh air. After a candid attack on her new employers yesterday, however, others are more likely to see a resemblance to a tornado.

Those employers will be left to ponder whether her accusations — the nub being that the BBC has been "arrogant and complacent" in its coverage — are just, if somewhat imprudent, or just impudent. One assumes that those who appointed this angry young woman, at 26, did so principally to address the very problems she has identified.

Without wishing to criticise the BBC, I think racing has been regarded as a second-class sport weekends, and it shouldn't be," she said. "Why, on a Saturday, shouldn't racing become the focal point?"

"We have the Martell Grand National and the Arc, and the British Festival of Racing, but there are other Saturdays when neither is the lead. I'd better not go on about it too much, or I'll get in trouble with Grandstand. But I do feel this sport has been misrepresented."

Balding's most earnest craving is to retrieve the Cheltenham contract from Channel 4, after its current rights expire next year, but she is emphatic that the BBC's own rights are too often treated as a divine. "We've always had better figures than Channel 4, and I think for too long we've sat on our figures and said: 'Look, we've got better figures — we should have everything'."

"That's complacent and arrogant. I hope to prove over the next year that we have much better coverage, that we



Imperial Call, winner of the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup in 1996, will miss this year's renewal through injury

Imperial Call ruled out for season

WHILE rumours persist that all is not well with Istabraq, the Smurfit Champion Hurdle favourite, it was yesterday confirmed that rather more tangible problems afflicted another of Ireland's top National Hunt horses (Chris McGrath writes). Imperial Call, who plundered the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup two years ago, will not be able to retrieve it next month; nor, in fact, will he race again this season.

Connections have been patiently denying that there is anything amiss with Istabraq, of whom it is being vaguely muttered that back trouble has emerged during schooling. Unhappily, no such assurance could be offered by Fergie Sutherland, who had been so dumb-

founded by Imperial Call's poor performance behind Dorcas Pride in the Hennessy Cognac Irish Gold Cup at Leopardstown earlier this month.

The trainer said yesterday: "We've done all the tests, including one which proves his heart is sound, but he's finished for the season. His back is slightly sore, but you will definitely see him next season."

Another chaser in the wings is General Wolfe, who skulked his claim to the Martell Grand National in the Peter Marsh Chase at Haydock last time. He has hurt a leg, and it is understood to be extremely doubtful that he will be seen again this season.

Tim Forster, his trainer, still has two

equal candidates to seek a record-equalling fourth National Hunt. Buck Jakes, yet to show his American form on these shores, goes on trial at Wincanton tomorrow, while Forster — as a rule dependably keen to accentuate the negative — believes that River Mandate's Cheltenham defeat at the weekend is "best ignored", as he was badly hampered.

Funters are prepared to ignore the rather more reprehensible conduct of Challenger Du Lac this season. The horse, who declined to go past Sea More Business in the King George VI Chase yesterday out to 94 from 71, by both Coral and Ladbrokes, to conquer his agoraphobia on his return to Kempton for the Racing Post Chase on Saturday.

RICHARD EVANS

Native Player (3:10) (Folkestone)

"On his recent British debut, Native Player was second to Red/Deuce, the subsequent winner of a grade two race at Cheltenham. With further improvement, Native Player over today's trip, he should be a contender."

Next best: Beryllium (2:50) (Sedgefield)

FOLKESTONE

THUNDERER
 2.10 Dragon's Back, 2.40 Gratom, 3.10 Native Player, 3.40 Smuggler's Point, 4.10 Reincheck, 4.40 Elie-Ye-Mou.
 Carl Evans: 4.10 Sparking Blake.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS

TWO JACKPOT MEETING

2.10 STANFORD SELLING HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (20 runners)

101-117 HEVER GOLF DIAMOND 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 102-118 GLOMING PATH 9 (GB) 5-12-20
 103-119 RUTH'S GAMBLE 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 104-120 SEVENTON MIRROR 50 (GB) 7-12-20
 105-121 DESERT CHALLENGER 27 (GB) 7-12-20
 106-122 BURIED MAME 5 (I) 7-12-20
 107-123 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
 108-124 BURNING ROCK 13 (GB) 7-12-20
 109-125 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
 110-126 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 111-127 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 112-128 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 113-129 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 114-130 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 115-131 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 116-132 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 117-133 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

3.10 LYNDRE NOVICES HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (10 runners)

101-117 HEVER GOLF DIAMOND 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 102-118 GLOMING PATH 9 (GB) 5-12-20
 103-119 RUTH'S GAMBLE 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 104-120 SEVENTON MIRROR 50 (GB) 7-12-20
 105-121 DESERT CHALLENGER 27 (GB) 7-12-20
 106-122 BURIED MAME 5 (I) 7-12-20
 107-123 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
 108-124 BURNING ROCK 13 (GB) 7-12-20
 109-125 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
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 115-131 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 116-132 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 117-133 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

3.30 JAY HANDICAP (Flat race, 1m 40yds) (10 runners)

101-117 HEVER GOLF DIAMOND 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 102-118 GLOMING PATH 9 (GB) 5-12-20
 103-119 RUTH'S GAMBLE 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 104-120 SEVENTON MIRROR 50 (GB) 7-12-20
 105-121 DESERT CHALLENGER 27 (GB) 7-12-20
 106-122 BURIED MAME 5 (I) 7-12-20
 107-123 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
 108-124 BURNING ROCK 13 (GB) 7-12-20
 109-125 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
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 115-131 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 116-132 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 117-133 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

4.30 SHIRE HANDICAP (Flat race, 1m 40yds) (10 runners)

101-117 HEVER GOLF DIAMOND 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 102-118 GLOMING PATH 9 (GB) 5-12-20
 103-119 RUTH'S GAMBLE 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 104-120 SEVENTON MIRROR 50 (GB) 7-12-20
 105-121 DESERT CHALLENGER 27 (GB) 7-12-20
 106-122 BURIED MAME 5 (I) 7-12-20
 107-123 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
 108-124 BURNING ROCK 13 (GB) 7-12-20
 109-125 RIVERMERE 20 (GB) 7-12-20
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 116-132 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 117-133 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

3.40 DES DOHERTY (30) HANDICAP HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (10 runners)

40-5005 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5006 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5007 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5008 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5009 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5010 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5011 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5012 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5013 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5014 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5015 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20

4.10 TENTERDEN MAIDEN HUNTERS CHASE (Chase race, 2m 110yds) (12 runners)

40-5005 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5006 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5007 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5008 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5009 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5010 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5011 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5012 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5013 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5014 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5015 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20

4.40 DAVID BENGE NOVICES HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (10 runners)

40-5005 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5006 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5007 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5008 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5009 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5010 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
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 40-5013 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5014 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 40-5015 JONAH MAN 14 (GB) 5-12-20

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M. A. Woodcock 3 winners from 28 races; 22.8%
 M. J. Baker 4 from 12; 33.3%; M. G. B. Jones 4 from 17; 23.5%
 J. C. E. White 4 from 17; 23.5%

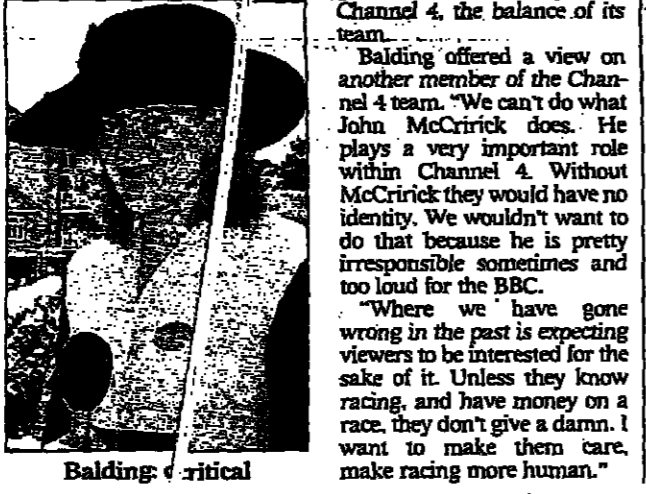
YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Doncaster
 Going: good to firm

2.00 (2m 110yds) hdb: 1. SKELTON 5 (GB) 6-1-10
 2. BUCKLE UP 5 (I) 7-12-20
 3. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 4. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 5. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 6. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 7. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 8. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 9. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20
 10. CROMWELL 5 (I) 7-12-20

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 M. J. Baker 4 from 12; 33.3%; M. G. B. Jones 4 from 17; 23.5%
 J. C. E. White 4 from 17; 23.5%



Balding is critical

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SEDGEFIELD

THUNDERER
 2.50 Ever Smile 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 2.50 GEORGE DILLINGHAM (map) 4.20 Just a King
 3.20 Swing Quartet 4.50 Bahaman Knight

Timekeeper's top rating: 2.50 GEORGE DILLINGHAM.
 Carl Evans: 4.20 Coolsawn Lady.

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 11212 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 102 11213 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 103 11214 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 104 11215 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 105 11216 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 106 11217 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 107 11218 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 108 11219 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 109 11220 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20
 110 11221 GOOD TIMES 10 (GB) 5-12-20

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

2.20 STANLEY RACING HURDLE HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (17 runners)

1 11222 EVER SMILE 14 (GB) 5-12-20
 2 11223 HANNA GRONBY 16 (GB) 5-12-20
 3 11224 MUSTER OF THE RICH 15 (GB) 5-12-20
 4 11225 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 5 11226 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 6 11227 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 7 11228 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 8 11229 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 9 11230 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 10 11231 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
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 12 11233 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
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 14 11235 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 15 11236 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 16 11237 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 17 11238 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

FORM FOCUS

Ever Smile left in handicap hurdle at Ascot (2m) on 15 Feb, but it was not in the race card for the 2.20 on 23 Feb. The horse was a runner in the 2.50 on 19 Feb and was a runner in the 3.20 on 25 Feb. It was a runner in the 4.20 on 25 Feb.

2.50 HARRY LANE MEMORIAL HURDLE HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (17 runners)

1 11239 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 2 11240 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 3 11241 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 4 11242 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 5 11243 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
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 7 11245 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 8 11246 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
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 10 11248 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 11 11249 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 12 11250 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 13 11251 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 14 11252 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 15 11253 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 16 11254 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 17 11255 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

FORM FOCUS

Fatemah Khairi was a runner in the 3.20 on 15 Feb and was a runner in the 4.20 on 25 Feb. It was a runner in the 5.20 on 25 Feb.

3.20 EBF TATTERSALLS (IRELAND) MARES NOVICES CHASE (Chase race, 2m 5f) (6 runners)

1 11256 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 2 11257 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 3 11258 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 4 11259 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 5 11260 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 6 11261 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

FORM FOCUS

Swing Quartet had a good race in the 2.50 on 15 Feb and was a runner in the 3.20 on 25 Feb. It was a runner in the 4.20 on 25 Feb.

3.50 ALAN MERRIGAN MEMORIAL HURDLE HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 5f) (5 runners)

1 11262 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 2 11263 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 3 11264 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 4 11265 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 5 11266 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

FORM FOCUS

Cross Cannon had a good race in the 2.50 on 15 Feb and was a runner in the 3.20 on 25 Feb. It was a runner in the 4.20 on 25 Feb.

4.20 SOUTH DURHAM MAIDEN HUNTERS CHASE (Chase race, 2m 5f) (12 runners)

1 11267 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 2 11268 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 3 11269 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 4 11270 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 5 11271 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 6 11272 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 7 11273 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 8 11274 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 9 11275 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 10 11276 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 11 11277 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 12 11278 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

FORM FOCUS

Parazito had a good race in the 2.50 on 15 Feb and was a runner in the 3.20 on 25 Feb. It was a runner in the 4.20 on 25 Feb.

4.50 STANLEY RACING HURDLE HURDLE (Hurdle race, 2m 110yds) (17 runners)

1 11279 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 2 11280 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 3 11281 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 4 11282 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 5 11283 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 6 11284 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 7 11285 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 8 11286 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 9 11287 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 10 11288 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 11 11289 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 12 11290 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 13 11291 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 14 11292 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 15 11293 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 16 11294 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20
 17 11295 WINDSOR HOUSE 10 (GB) 7-12-20

FORM FOCUS

Bahaman Knight was a runner in the 2.50 on 15 Feb and was a runner in the 3.20 on 25 Feb. It was a runner in the 4.20 on 25 Feb.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M. A. Woodcock 3 winners from 28 races; 22.8%
 M. J. Baker 4 from 12; 33.3%; M. G. B. Jones 4 from 17; 23.5%
 J. C. E. White 4 from 17; 23.5%

TRAINER'S

W. J. Baker 4 from 12; 33.3%
 M. J. Baker 4 from 12; 33.3%
 M. G. B. Jones 4 from 17; 23.5%
 J. C. E. White 4 from 17; 23.5%

Jockey retires

DAVID BRIDGWATER, 27, announced his retirement as a National Hunt jockey yesterday. The freelance, formerly stable jockey to Martin Pipe, has been told by doctors that he will never sufficiently recover from an elbow injury sustained over hurdles at Ascot two weeks ago.

CRICKET

West Indies turn to spinner for fourth Test

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

REACTING to defeat, rather than routine victory, remains a rare imposition for West Indians. It stirs barely rational debate, re-creates the worst of the inter-island partisanship that blighted their cricket for so long and made team selection for the fourth Test match, which begins here on Friday, a keenly anticipated bulletin.

Wes Hall, who chairs the selection panel, felt the need to fly back to Barbados from here to resolve the pricklier issues face to face with his fellow selectors. Usually, the telephone suffices, but the delayed announcement, made yesterday, explained much.

The curiously myopic policy of including six fast bowlers has been abandoned, at least temporarily. The West Indies

Lara. He took five England wickets in the two-day game at Pointe-à-Pierre. The two fast bowlers omitted are Kenny Benjamin, who played in both Trinidad Tests without impressing, and Franklyn Rose. Holder, scorer of the only century made against England on tour so far, is probably present as a warning to any underachieving batsmen and the final place, that of third fast bowler, will be contested by Ian Bishop and Nixon McLean.

There were other matters on the selectorial agenda, including the insubordination of the vice-captain, Carl Hooper, who ignored an instruction to play for Guyana against England this week. Rumours that Hooper, who is seeking citizenship of Trinidad, would be dropped were fanciful; a quiet reprimand is far more likely.

This, however, is another issue that arouses public ire and Hall will probably be accused of favouritism. He will also find some hostility here for choosing Holder, a fellow Barbadian, ahead of Clayton Lambert, the darling of Guyanese cricket followers.

Hall, 60, describes his job as an acceptance of a lot, a duty rather than a pleasure. A devout Christian and regular preacher, he relates everything to his beliefs. "It is my calling to do this," he often says, "though I never sought or coveted the position." When he explains the reception he is given on his travels, it is easy to see why enjoyment does not enter the equation.

"There is a spirit of condemnation in the West Indies that does not exist elsewhere," he said. "The local jealousies are stronger than for years, perhaps since the 1960s, when I was one of nine Barbadians in a tour party. It can be uncomfortable travelling to some areas in the Caribbean as a

selector, but I can take the licks." Hall's broad, slightly stooped but unmistakable figure is seldom absent from important fixtures, but also seldom accompanied. "I don't want fuss, I don't want people talking to me all the time because I'm Wes Hall. I just do my best in this job," he says, with one of the most expressive scowls in sport.

Having been critical of the conduct of his own board, especially during his term as West Indies team manager, he has contributed towards a more open government. The board, once secretive, has

started issuing newsletters and Hall himself called a press conference before this series, an unprecedented step in these parts. Such measures, he knows, are a flimsy defence against the most deep-seated enemies of West Indian redevelopment - parochialism and complacency. "Anyone who still thinks we are world champions needs a check-up," he said. "But many do still refuse to recognise the scarcity of good cricket and good cricketers."

"We have begun to put a structure in place, with under-19 and under-15 teams and tours for West Indies A sides.



Holder is the only batsman to score a century against England on tour so far

Yorkshire summer help from outside

By SIMON WILDE

YORKSHIRE have called in Graham Gooch to help them try to rediscover their winning ways. Gooch, an England selector and freelance coach who will also assist Durham this summer, is to talk to the county's players about the psychological aspects of the game at a meeting next month.

Gooch has been brought in at the instigation of Martyn Moxon, who has started a three-year term as Yorkshire's first director of coaching. "I particularly want Graham to talk to the players about the mental side of the game, but as he is also involved with the Test team he will be able to encourage them to think in terms of England selection as well," Moxon said.

Moxon's appointment is a significant departure for a club that has generally eschewed the hired-on track suit manager, though Ray Illingworth and Steve Oldham have occupied the position in the past. Yorkshire advertised for a manager a couple of years ago but failed to attract what they considered suitable candidates.

"Martyn will be trying to help the players focus on their game and act as their confidante. In the past we have lacked the killer instinct and not always coped well under pressure," Chris Hassell, Yorkshire's chief executive, said. "He can help us achieve our potential."

The demands on Moxon's time will be considerable if he continues to play himself, though that is uncertain as he is recovering slowly from a back operation last October. "I would say the chances of me playing are 50-50. If I do not play, I expect to spend most of my time with the first team, though I also have commitments to the second XI and Academy sides," he said.

Michael Slater, eager to regain his place in his country's Test side, was the top scorer with 98 as the Australians began their tour of India by scoring the 305 for eight on the opening day of their match against Bombay. Rajesh Pawar, an 18-year-old left-arm spinner, picked up three wickets as the touring side fell away after reaching 152 for one.

Gooch leads tour de force

Simon Wilde declares the England A trip to Kenya and Sri Lanka a success

THE three one-day defeats with which their tour ended should not detract from the exceptional effort of the England A side in winning the unofficial Test series in Sri Lanka. Winning matches that matter in the sapping conditions of the sub-continent is a thing that senior England sides have notably failed to do of late.

Nick Knight's team won two of the three four-day matches against Sri Lanka A from the most unlikely positions in Matara and Moratuwa, where tame draws appeared inevitable on the final mornings. Through sheer character and determination, a young side, produced by a victorious and extended the A team's unbeaten run overseas to 24 first-class matches.

The physical and mental demands involved undoubtedly played their parts in the disappointing conclusion, but that should not erode the desire for self-congratulation. Knight himself deserves credit: his previous captaincy experience was limited and unpromising, and the leadership was part of his being overlooked for the Caribbean tour, yet he acquired some of the traits of a good captain.

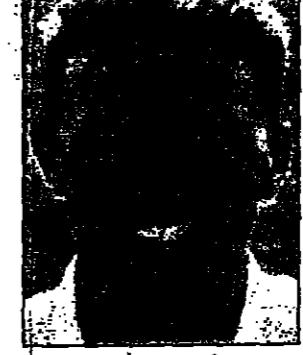
Even more impressive was the management partnership of Mike Gatting and Graham Gooch, who worked well as a coaching unit and whose experience of the sub-continent was invaluable. The indefatigable Gooch, in particular, earned his stripes, dealing with a range of crises with a felicity that would surprise those who remember only the lugubrious nature of his Test captaincy.

Inevitably, in a party chosen on youthful promise more than mature achievement, some players were found wanting. Hopefully, those will prove temporary shortcomings. Of more immediate concern, because they may soon impinge on the make-up of the full Test side, were the successes.

Three players stood out.

Ashley Giles, confirming the promise that he showed on the A tour of Australia last year, was the pivotal bowler and played three vital late-order innings. His orthodox left-arm spin brought him 13 wickets at less than 15 apiece at Matara and Moratuwa. Ben Hollis also revealed his pedigree before but was nevertheless a revelation as a batsman. His two innings in Lord's showpieces last summer bore the hallmarks of a glorious chance; here, in the Tests, he played with a sure mix of defence and attack, spreading 13 hours at the crease for a total of 378 runs, with barely a false stroke throughout.

With his new-ball bowling also showing signs of great



Maddy: find of tour

er control and verve, the most exciting young cricketer in English cricket suggested for the first time that he could live up to all the hype and hope and, one day, become a genuine world-class all-rounder.

In a sense, though, the find of the tour was Darren Maddy. He may not be a natural stroke-maker but he possesses two prize gifts: one is his power of organisation, the other his dedication, which is total. His enthusiasm quickly won over Gooch and Gatting, Gooch perhaps recognising in Maddy his own extraordinary level of commitment, as did his steady output of runs - 793 in 14 innings in all matches in Kenya and Sri Lanka.

SQUAD

WEST INDIES: B C Lara (captain), C L Hooper, S L Campbell, S C Williams, S Chandrapaul, J C Adams, D Williams, R T C Holder, C E L Ambrisco, C A Walsh, I R Bishop, D Ramnarine, N A M McLean

squad that gathered here late yesterday contained an additional batsman, in Roland Holder, and a member of that most neglected Caribbean species, a spin bowler.

The chosen man is Dimanath Ramnarine from Trinidad. Cases were made for two orthodox left-arm spinners, Winston Reid, of Barbados, and Neil McGarrell, from Guyana, but the selectors preferred wrist spin and the uncapped Ramnarine, 22, is likely to play on a pitch parched by drought.

Ramnarine toured South Africa with West Indies A late last year and has been fast-tracked past two largely disappointing leg spinners, Rawl Lewis and Rajendra Dhanraj, not least through the support of his Trinidad captain, Brian

Advertisement for 'YOU'LL SELL YOUR HOUSE FASTER WHEN YOU RING TIMES CLASSIFIED.' The ad features a large illustration of a two-story house with a chimney, set against a dark background. The text is bold and prominent, with the phone number '0171 481 4' at the bottom. The ad is framed by 'THE TIMES' and 'THE SUNDAY TIMES' logos at the top.

FOR THE RECORD

A collection of sports news snippets under the heading 'FOR THE RECORD'. It includes sections for BASKETBALL, DIVING, ROWING, TENNIS, RUGBY UNION, and TABLE TENNIS, with brief reports on various international and domestic events.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

A detailed table of sports fixtures for the day. It lists various football leagues (FA Cup, Nationwide League, Premier League, etc.), basketball games, and other sports events with their respective times and venues.

SNOW REPORTS

A table providing snow reports for various regions. It includes columns for location, depth of snow, conditions, and a forecast for the next 24 hours.

A large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page. It features a large, stylized headline 'and in disa after Ashto signs as co' and another line 'offers chance Welsh to atone'. Below the text is a large, dark image, possibly of a person's face, which is partially obscured by the text and the overall layout of the ad.

RUGBY UNION

Ireland in disarray after Ashton resigns as coach

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

BRIAN ASHTON resigned as Ireland coach yesterday and so the crisis that the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) hoped to have averted when it gave him a six-year contract 12 months ago is upon it once more.

In January last year Murray Kidd, the New Zealander, resigned after 15 months in the role and, coincidentally, 11 days before Ireland were due to play France. This year, having lost their opening game of the Five Nations Championship against Scotland, Ireland's next opponent, on March 7 in Paris, is also France, who are halfway towards a successive grand slam.

Ashton, 51, would only cite personal reasons for his abrupt departure, but it is no secret that his relationship with Pat Whelan, the Ireland team manager, had seldom been an easy one. "I'm sad at the way it's turned out, but I don't want to say any more than that," Ashton said.

The former Orrell scrum half, who went on to be assistant coach to England in the mid-Eighties and then formed a successful alliance with Jack Rowell at Bath, found himself unable to wave a magic wand over Irish fortunes. He accepted the role of adviser to the team before the Five Nations last season, only days after resigning as Bath's head coach during the club's winter of discontent.

A 32-15 defeat by France in his opening match in charge was no disgrace and Irish glee was unconfined when they beat Wales 26-25 in Cardiff. Despite a 40-point drubbing by England, the IRFU decided that Ashton's reputation deserved a long-term contract, embracing both the 1999 and 2003 World Cups, and reached agreement with him on February 27 last year.

Nevertheless, Ireland finished bottom of the championship and endured a torrid tour of New Zealand with a development team during the summer. The fact that they provided four players for the British Isles pack that beat South Africa was nullified by injury to Jeremy Davidson, the lock, and the transparent loss of form by Keith Wood and Eric Miller.

The only comfort for this season came from a win over Canada. Predictable defeat by New Zealand was followed by losses to Italy and, critically, the one-point reverse against Scotland earlier this month, when Ashton was at a loss to understand the ineptitude of his players.

There have also been murmurings in Ireland that the coach spent too much time watching players based in England, rather than attending leading club matches in Ireland, though in that respect Ashton had a string of respected observers in place. He withdrew from the scheduled training session last week with shingles, he stressed, had nothing to do with his decision to stand down.

It has been a bad month for high-profile coaches. Bob Dwyer, who was approached by Ireland before Ashton's appointment, lost his job with Leicester and Willie Anderson, at one time forwards coach with Ireland, was dismissed last week by London Irish.

Mike Ruddock and Warren Gatland, directors of rugby at Leinster and Connacht respectively, have been helping with the Ireland squad preparations and Gatland, a strong contender for the national job, will take charge for the remaining Five Nations games. The former New Zealand hooker played for Galwegians before turning to coaching and has been relatively successful over the past 18 months with Connacht.

Alan Hossie, chairman of the Five Nations committee, will make a statement today over Phil Vickery's appeal against his 30-day suspension. The Gloucester prop was cited for punching after England's win over Wales last Saturday and was subsequently banned by the match commissioner, Peter Boyle. The Rugby Football Union has supported Vickery's appeal.

The Five Nations committee has dismissed an appeal by the French federation over an incident involving Craig Chalmers during the match between Scotland and France last weekend.



Ashton: murmurings

Cup offers chance for Welsh to atone

By DAVID HANDS

IT WILL be too late for the selectors, but cup competitions in England and Wales will give several members of the Wales team beaten 60-26 at Twickenham last Saturday the opportunity to make amends. They need to do so. The mood of their supporters this week has been one of intense disappointment at the attitude displayed during the record-breaking defeat.

The team to play Scotland at Wembley on March 7 is due to be named on Friday and the Wales management, having made their feelings known to the squad this week, will be looking hard at positions such as full back, fly half and No 8. The one area not at risk, presumably, is centre, where Scott Gibbs and Allan Bateman form such a formidable pairing.

Bateman, the Richmond centre, played despite a haematoma on his leg, an injury that stopped him train-

ing for his club yesterday in preparation for the Tetley's Bitter Cup quarter-final with Saracens on Saturday. That cup tie gives not only Bateman but Barry Williams and Scott Quinnell the chance to show their true worth, and Richmond will be as anxious as anyone to see them perform well in the light of the criticism that John Kingston, the club's director of rugby, made of his team after their league defeat by Sale last week.

It is no coincidence that Kingston has gone against his normal habit and named his team early. He wants to build a sense of confidence after a bad ten days and will look, in particular, at Quinnell. The No 8 has been suffering from influenza and laryngitis, and probably should not have played against England. Though he hurt his hand early on, he was replaced as much for the debilitating effect of the illness as anything else.



Whatever the sport, the versatile Slocombe is renowned for her meticulous approach

Slocombe coaches netball's elite in the art of winning

Cathy Harris reports on the hockey trainer taking a new direction

Since Slocombe has taken us one step further from every thought we put to her. She has challenged our thinking about elite performance and refuses to accept mediocrity. Praise indeed for the former England and Great Britain hockey coach, especially when it comes from Pauline Harrison, performance director at the All England Netball Association (AENA).

Inconceivable after Great Britain's defeat by Holland in a penalty shoot-out for the bronze medal at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Slocombe retired and shunned the limelight. It was the Sports Council that drew her out of retirement, recognising her qualities after 13 years coaching at international level and recommending her to the AENA as an expert in world-class performance. It seemed the opportunity, appointing her as a consultant to help it to adopt a more professional approach to competition and training.

Slocombe is completely at ease with the switch. "In the days before generous lottery funding, amateur sports worked in isolation," she said. "Hockey, netball and lacrosse at cetera were all battling against each other, but now

ing, bringing in psychology, nutrition, physiology and so on and I'm sure the current national coach, Maggie Souzyve, is doing things her way, and rightly so."

A former England indoor and outdoor international, Slocombe was appointed OBE after steering England to a gold medal in the 1991 European championship. She was in the news again just before Atlanta when her relationship with David Whitaker, coach to Great Britain's 1998 Olympic gold medal-winning squad, was revealed. It was an intrusion into her private life that she strongly resented. Nowadays they live in Bristol, where Slocombe is a principal lecturer at the University of the West of England.

There is no doubt that Slocombe's innovations and meticulous approach helped to set new standards in hockey and paved the way for the considerable success achieved by England and Great Britain. She may not have met with universal approval, and her tough, uncompromising approach led to criticism, but she laid the foundations and set the standards for the next generation. "Hockey's loss," Harrison said, "is definitely netball's gain."

GOLF

New clubs provide seasonal boost

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN DUBAI

AT THE Desert Classic here, an event that brings the European Tour closer to home, the talk is of Colin Montgomerie and his missing inches. Some have gone from his not inconsiderable frame, after gym work at home, and some have gone from his irons. In both cases, the man who was the leading golfer in Europe for a fifth time last year believes that smaller is better.

When one thinks of golfers working out, it is Greg Norman and Nick Faldo who come to mind rather than Montgomerie. They each spend two hours most days lifting weights, stretching, bending, cycling and running, but Montgomerie, with the daily assistance lately of a personal trainer, has managed to lose 10lb over the past few months.

This has taken him back to what he describes as his fighting weight. When asked what that weight was, he said: "I'm about right now." His grin confirmed that under no circumstances would he reveal his weight.

Montgomerie has acquired a new set of irons during his seven-week break since winning the Andersen Consulting World Matchplay Championship. Made of stainless steel, they might signal the start of a trend away from the NASA clubs — so-called because they use the titanium and graphite materials developed for the space race.

These latter clubs have dominated the market recently, but now there may be a return to more traditional clubhead sizes, those normally associated with forged-steel irons. Montgomerie has been impressed with the new irons, using them in practice here.

With his caddy, Alastair McLean, measuring the results, Montgomerie has hit the ball consistently the same distance more often, but just in case he cannot get on with them, he has brought his old irons as well.

Unlike Tom Lehman, who has withdrawn from the tournament, Montgomerie is undeterred by the Iraqi crisis. He said: "Nothing's going to happen here. This is as neutral as it gets and as safe a place as you'd ever want to be."

If nothing else, Montgomerie is his own man. "Those who know me know I don't practise that much compared to most. I was one behind going to the start of the back nine here last year. I feel with my freshness and my new clubs I will do well again."

BOWLS

England delight in series victory

By DAVID RHYS JONES

ENGLAND whitewashed Australia in the final international in Sydney yesterday, winning in all three disciplines — triples, pairs and singles — and taking the series 3-0.

John Ottaway, Tony Alcock and Andy Thomson defeated Kelvin Kerkow, Steve Glasson and Mark Jacobsen, 4-2, 2-10, 6-2, 6-3, in the opening session, before Ottaway and Thomson ensured victory with a 9-3, 6-7, 7-6, 8-3 win over Glasson and Jacobsen.

Alcock was able to play a relaxed game against Kerkow, whom he beat in the semi-finals on his way to the world outdoor singles title at Adelaide in 1996, and returned an impressive 7-4, 7-2, 7-5 scorecard.

While England were cock-a-hoop, such an emphatic defeat will not help the sport in Australia, where officials are desperate to halt a steep decline in the number of participants at club level.



Alcock relaxed

Australia, still the world's biggest bowling country, has lost more than 35,000 male bowlers in the past five years, and the decision to challenge England to a televised series was taken in the hope of encouraging more people to take up the game.

All three Australian players were in their twenties, but, ironically, Bowls Australia's attempt to attract a younger audience seems to have backfired, because the home side, who needed a good result to inspire the viewing public, were simply outplayed.

"A late decision to move the first series indoors probably cost the Australians dearly," George Shaw, the secretary of the English Bowling Association, said.

"The series was to have been played outdoors, but was changed at the request of the television company," Shaw said. "Given our lack of experience on carpet, I'm sure the Aussies will be thinking they would have stood more chance on grass."

Newbury appear not too bitter despite grounds for appeal

NEWBURY have until 2pm today to decide whether to try to be reinstated into the Tetley's Bitter Cup. Last week they discovered that Sale had fielded a player, Dion O'Cuinneagain, who was technically not registered when the clubs met in the fifth round of the competition at Heywood Road on January 25. It appears that the failure to register the player is the Rugby Football Union's fault and not Sale's, with whom Newbury have no argument. Sale won 38-11.

O'Cuinneagain, a South African with an Irish passport, came on as a second-half substitute in the match, having earlier played several games for the club before Christmas. However, Sale had faxed details of the player's passport and other documentation to Twickenham in October but these had been mislaid as they arrived on the day the relevant department was moving offices. Sale subsequently contacted the union and were apparently assured that the club had done everything to meet the necessary requirements.

It was a red-tape mix-up to which the RFU put its hands up in a fax from Mike Wilson, the chairman of the competition's sub-committee. He wrote: "There have been administrative mistakes and an unfortunate set of circumstances which have allowed the situation to develop since November. In view of this alone, no further action is contemplated other than a reminder to all concerned of the necessity to abide by the routine of registration."

Newbury have taken legal advice and have a member prepared to finance an action.



It provides is the psychological glue." It's a shame that he was not around before Wales came unstuck.

Park's good life
Is this the best record in England? Westcombe Park, in London League Two South, are unbeaten in 24 matches this season in all competitions — scoring in the process 1,009 points and conceding only 239. They are second in the table, with three games in hand over Winchester, the leaders, and are in the semi-finals of the Kent Cup after beating Canterbury 36-18 on Sunday. The Orpington-based club is also still in the RFU-NPI Intermediate Cup after wins over Kenilworth and New Brighton. They travel to Cornwall this weekend for a quarter-final against Penzance and Newlyn.

Fraud inquiry
Fraud squad officers are looking into the financial affairs of Coventry RFC after the receipt of a letter from a member of the public, DCI Terry Street, head of West Midlands' Fraud Squad, said that the inquiry was at an early stage. "The letter draws our attention to the financial management of the club. Our first step will be to speak to the writer. We deal in facts, not innuendo and we shall not be interviewing anyone at the club at this stage," he said. Two weeks ago, local police were called in by the club when a confidential document detailing the wages paid to Derek Eves, the director of rugby, and a number of players was faxed to the local media.

All in a name
The International Rugby Football Board has a new name, and a new logo. Well, a slightly new name from that by which it has been known since 1886. From now on the organisation will be called simply the International Rugby Board. Vernon Pugh, the first independent chairman of the IRB said: "The change... makes good sense when you remember most of the world sees football as a game played with a round ball."

England's win ended a 30-year wait for the Greenwood family. Dick Greenwood, the England flanker, captain and later coach, lost four and drew one of his five internationals between 1966 and 1969. Will, his son, and the present England centre endured three losses and two draws before finally breaking the family's duck against the Welsh.

MARK SOUSTER



Greenwood: duck broken

BASKETBALL

Nemeth in bid to buck trend

By NICHOLAS HARLING

LASZLO NEMETH, who has had little success against East European opposition during his time as England coach, faces Belarus in Minsk tonight. He will hope the disappointment of a 96-81 defeat by Austria in a friendly at Baden on Monday will be forgotten in their fourth tie of the European championship semi-final round.

Like Belarus, England have won one of their opening three games in group C and to have a realistic hope of filling the third qualifying place. Dr Nemeth will have to inspire his squad to victory tonight.

"This is the important one," he said. "The Austria game served as a useful test as it enabled us to try out a few experiments and different rotations in defence."

"It would have been nice to have beaten them but I will worry far less about that result in what was a meaningless game if we can overcome Belarus. What I really need is other people to step up. We cannot always rely on Steve Bucknall and John Amaechi for getting all the points."

Bucknall, who scored 23, and Amaechi, who contributed 22, did not quite do that against Austria but the only other player to reach double figures was Peter Scantlebury, the captain, with ten points in his 120th international.

England, trailing 46-36 at the interval, trimmed the arrears to 68-64 only to be hit by a final flurry of points from Drazen Stazic. On Saturday England take on Israel, the unbeaten joint group leaders, in Manchester.

ROWING

Universities ask for £1m

By MATT DICKINSON

THE popularity of the Boat Race is being put to the test by Oxford and Cambridge's decision to demand £1 million a year from any sponsor wishing to take over from Beefeater, whose 12-year agreement ends next month.

So far no company has come forward and there are fears that the universities are pricing themselves out of the market. The £1 million fee demanded exceeds the amount that most FA Carling Premiership clubs earn from their main sponsors in a year. Aston Villa are believed to be asking £750,000 from any company wanting its name on the team shirts.

Several English companies, including one leading firm of accountants, are already understood to have balked at the universities' demands. But Scope Ketchum Sponsorship, the sports marketing agency that has been searching for a successor to Beefeater since last summer, believes the new negotiating figure is a realistic one.

"We think sponsoring the Boat Race is comparable with, if not even more attractive than, sponsoring a Premiership football team," Betty Maitland, the managing director, said.

"You have to bear in mind that the company involved is a sole sponsor, so they do not have to worry about interference. It is a unique opportunity for a company because it is a unique event."

"We targeted a small number of identified people first and now we have widened that to a couple of hundred. But at the moment we are just alerting people to the opportunity. Many are still working on their budgets for 1998, never mind next year."

Beefeater's association with the event will end on March 28 when Oxford and Cambridge

SNOKER

Griffiths steps down in anger

By PHIL YATES

TERRY GRIFFITHS, who has successfully headed the coaching scheme of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) since retiring from competition in May 1996, yesterday submitted his resignation to the game's governing body.

Griffiths, the world champion 19 years ago, has found it impossible to continue given the wranglings between those in favour of Rex Williams as chairman of the WPBSA and a large rebel group. "I am bitterly disappointed that I have no alternative but to tender my resignation," he said.

"Since my appointment, my work has been constantly disrupted by the power struggles within the game. The current, horrific political situation has left me in an untenable position."

Griffiths, 50, who by giving three months' notice has effectively turned his back on £50,000 from the third year of his consultancy contract, remains an extremely popular figure with his fellow players. Indeed, many observers view the Llanelli snooker club owner as an ideal choice to assume the role of chairman should the motion to remove Williams, and two other WPBSA directors, carry the day at a meeting in Bristol on March 4.

Meanwhile, Stephen Hendry, one of those vehemently opposed to the WPBSA administration, has sent out a letter to all voting members outlining the reasons behind his opposition to Williams.

سكنا من الأصل



...son to
...aw on
...reserves

...referee's dis

...land's best

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FOOTBALL

Ferguson to draw on his reserves

By DAVID MADDOCK AND RUSSELL KEMPSON

ALEX FERGUSON has a certain stare that he employs only when he refuses to entertain any argument. It is direct, piercing and was much used yesterday afternoon. "We are treating this match with total seriousness, no question," he said, eyes glaring.



The Manchester United manager was referring to the FA Cup fifth-round replay away to Barnsley tonight. The suggestion is that the FA Carling Premiership champions are not unduly concerned. Ferguson's team for the 1-1 draw at Old Trafford, which necessitated this replay, certainly suggested as much, and the United line-up at Oakwell will also ask questions about United's commitment.



Korda, the top seed, provides a study in concentration during his hard-earned win over Prinosil in the Guardian Direct Cup yesterday

Lloyd raises alarm over British rift

By JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

RELATIONS between Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman, never better than cordial, have deteriorated to such an extent that the pair have not spoken since Henman announced two weeks ago that he would not join forces with Rusedski to represent Great Britain in the World Team Cup.

The impasse, an almost inevitable consequence of their intense on-court rivalry, creates a sore on the skin of British tennis. So concerned is David Lloyd, the Davis Cup captain, that he will write both players to clear-the-air talks during the Guardian Direct Cup in London this week.

The stand-off has apparently developed as much because of Henman's decision to bypass the World Team Cup as the manner in which the announcement was handled. Rusedski complained bitterly that he was among the last to know. Henman's camp dismisses that claim out of hand.

It was a day Petr Korda, seeded No 1, survived with a sense of relief. The Australian Open champion and world No 2 required more than two hours to defeat David Prinosil, of Germany, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4. Korda, whose service wobbled several times, failed to convert two match points in the second set and was less than convincing.

It was a very tough match for me," he said. "He had beaten me the last two times we had met." Korda, from the Czech Republic, appeared unusually animated — almost certainly because he is within striking distance of taking over from Pete Sampras as the world No 1.

Should Sampras fail to reach the semi-finals in Philadelphia this week, Korda could topple the perennial leader by reaching the semi-finals here. He faces a series of tough assignments, however. His next opponent is Cedric Pioline, of France, whom he beat en route to the Australian Open crown. After that, his projected opponents include Karol Kucera and Rusedski, who this evening plays his first-round match against Marc-Kevin Gollner, of Germany.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Edwards has her best day by miles

SAILING: Tracy Edwards and her all-women crew on Royal 5 SunAlliance registered their biggest daily mileage on day 21 of their round-the-world record attempt yesterday when they completed 456 miles at an average speed of 19 knots (Edward Gorman writes).

Young qualifies

TABLE TENNIS: Terry Young, of England, won his qualifying match in the Qatar Open Championships in Doha yesterday and joins Matthew Syed, the England No 1, in the competition proper today. Young beat Mads Sorensen, of Denmark, 21-19, 15-21, 21-16 and is favourite to win a wild-card for the England men's squad at the European championships in Holland on April 23. Alex Perry and Andrew Eden, also of England, both failed to qualify for the main men's singles competition.

Snow through

REAL TENNIS: Julian Snow will challenge Robert Fahey, of Australia, for the world championship next month after the British amateur champion beat Mike Gooding 7-2 in a best-of-13-sets eliminator in Melbourne. Snow was rarely threatened and never looked back after opening up a four-set lead on the second day's play. Should Snow beat Fahey, who has been world champion since 1994, he will be Britain's first world champion since 1987.

Referee's display earns red card

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

REFEREES in the FA Carling Premiership are to come under increasing scrutiny from football's governing bodies and will be suspended if their displays are deemed unsatisfactory. Dermot Gallagher is the first casualty and has been dropped from refereeing the match between Blackburn Rovers and Leicester City at Ewood Park on Saturday.

European championship finals of 1996 but snapped an Achilles tendon in his left leg in the match between France and Bulgaria. He spent nine months recuperating, returning in March last year.

Gallagher, 40, has been punished for his display in Arsenal's 2-0 victory against Chelsea at Highbury on February 8. Although he booked seven players in an often physical match, he was criticised for not sending off Steve Bould, the Arsenal defender, after he had committed a "professional" foul on Gianluca Vialli, the Chelsea forward.

suppose that, deep down, we know what the ultimate consequence might be if we don't do the job, but it's still a bolt from the blue. "We have to perform to our best ability, like any other job, and if we don't do it properly, we can be reprimanded. If this is part of the modern game, about being more accountable, then we have to accept it, but I don't think it's necessarily a good thing. It's just more and more pressure on us."



Gallagher: suspended

Scotland's best in league of their own

Scottish football has at last got the better of all its European rivals. The triumph has not come in any of the three tournaments run by UEFA, because the clubs were all knocked out of them five months ago, but has taken place instead in the oft-derided Bell's Scottish League premier division.

Kevin McCarrra suggests that the close competition at the top of the premier division beats anything else in Europe covering Marseilles, Metz, Monaco and Lens, provides a gripping spectacle, even if it is not quite so enthralling as the premier division.

if Celtic or Rangers found themselves in such a position there. Hearts recovered to win 4-2. The leading scorer at the club, Jim Hamilton, has just 11 goals to his credit, but the side possesses such cumulative verve that it always seems likely that someone will find the net. The club is the sort of role model that is hard to emulate. All managers wish to buy good players cheaply, but few will be as consistent in doing so as Jim Jefferies.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Take a look at this deal and decide whether you would put your money on declarer or the defence. The contract is Four Spades and the lead is a trump.

Bridge hand diagram showing Dealer North, East-West game, IMPs, and card distributions for Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs.

The 1997 Bermuda Bowl quarter-final clash between United States and China was generally a high standard but this board was an exception. In one room the US declarer got a heart lead away from the king and quickly made ten tricks.

heart trick. So does that mean that the contract should fail? Not at all. Declarer went astray at trick three. He can see that he will need two heart tricks, so instead of leading a club off the table he should lead a low heart and play the queen, whether or not the king appears. He has now set up a finesse position against the jack of hearts and, as it happens, that finesse succeeds and provides him with his tenth trick.

WORD-WATCHING

- By Philip Howard
URTICA
a. A Caledonian saint
b. A stinging-nettle
c. The form of a syllogism
TRELSON
a. A hat
b. A lobster's belly
c. A pattern of brick-laying

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Anand leads in Linares

The second round of the elite tournament in Linares, Spain, witnessed some particularly bloodthirsty chess. At this exalted level caution is often the order of the day, but at Linares every game in the second round was decisive. Anand defeated Swidler, Kramnik beat Topalov and Shirov beat Ivanchuk, while Kasparov had a bye. Anand therefore leads with 2/2.



- White: Viswanathan Anand
Black: Peter Swidler
Linares 1998
Modern Defence
1 e4 g6
2 d4 Bg7
3 Nc3 d5
4 Bc4 e6
5 Nf3 b5
6 Bc3 Nc6
7 e5 Nf5
8 Nf4 Nf6
9 Nf3 Qd7
10 B-d3 Bc2
11 Nf3 Nf6
12 Bc3 Nf6
13 Nf3 Nf6
14 a4
15 Nf4 Nf6
16 Bc4 Nf6
17 Rf4 Qc5
18 Rf3 Qc4
19 c3 b3
20 Rf3 Qc5
21 Bc3 Qc5
22 Qd3 a5
23 Pa3 Kf7
24 Nf2 Nf4
25 Qc2 Nf4
26 Q3 Nf6
27 c4 Qf5
28 Ne4 Kf8
29 Qd1 Rf4
30 Rb3 Rf4
31 Rb5 Qf7
32 Rb5 Kf7
33 Rb5 d5
34 Nc5 Qf5
35 Bc3 Rf3
36 Qd2 Rf4
37 g4 Nf4
38 Qd1 Nf4
39 Kf1 Nf4
40 Rf2 Nc4
41 Rf2 Nc3
42 Rf2
Black resigns

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
Black to play. From the game Gelfand - Lautier, Belgrade 1997. This position features a remarkable missed opportunity. The French grandmaster Joel Lautier soon lost this game but would not have done if he had found the right move here. What did he miss?
Solution on page 42

Another joker from Formula One

As the Winter Olympic Games come to an end, the memory of the silliness lingers on: tumbling bodies in short-track speed-skating, passive-smoking snowboarders, the double-daffy jumps of the mogul skiers. But Formula One motor racing is not fazed. Anything you can do, we can do sillier.

under the swingeing punishment of, er, absolutely nothing.

So, here is the bright idea: an overtaking lane. The sport's governing body has been canvassing for suggestions as to how racing can be made, well, a little more like racing. Patrick Head, the Williams technical director, has come up with an idea redolent of *Monty Python*. "I'm suggesting a short-cut at a hairpin," he said, "which drivers can use, say, four times a race. If they use it a fifth time, they are disqualified." Eureka! All at once, I hear the voice of the late, lamented Eddie Waring commenting on the television show *It's a Knockout*.

"And-ah... Lovestoff-ah... playing their joke-ah!" Playing the joker, going for double points: what could be better for a made-for-TV spectacular? If the suggestion is taken up, Formula One will become a nonsense inside a ludicrousness.

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

Clearly the idea doesn't go far enough. There should be a crawler lane for any car driven by Damon Hill. A figure-eight configuration, too, so that cars constantly cross each other's paths in a series of giant, T-boiling crashes. No great change there, I admit. Perhaps an obligatory firewall for every infringement of the four-times-joke rule.

worked notes. "But then, racing is an artificial activity." Wrong. Racing is an atavistic activity, whether you are doing it on foot or on the back of a horse. You all start in a line, and the fastest goes past everybody else and wins.

But Formula One motor racing has established the cunning ploy of starting the fastest cars at the front and the slowest at the back. This does not help the concept of a race. If you think this through, you see that overtaking—racing—is ruled out before the engines are even switched on. It is like giving Manchester United a ten-point start, firing Midfielder over more than three points, and then being surprised when they fail to overtake United.

The air is full of talk about one-sided results in rugby union after France and England scored 101 points against various hapless Celts. Wales would have liked to play the joker against England. Their points could have counted

twice as much as England's, to make a match of it.

But we are now moving towards the subject of handicapping, and handicapping is not part of sport. It is for games. Snooker. I'll give you three blacks to start. All of recreational golf is based on the handicap system, a clever idea that makes the game work brilliantly. As a game. Most horse racing is based on handicaps: jolly good for betting, but, for sport, give me the races at level weights, preferably between the best horses.

Patrick Head has not come to terms with everyting. He has not suggested an appropriate punishment for the crime of crashing into a driver who is overtaking you by means of the joker lane. But I've got a great idea for this, and I am confident that Formula One will take it up with all possible speed: absolutely nothing.

'Of course the motors aren't really racing'

I really think I have a future in sports administration.

It's like giving Man United a ten-point start'



Cayard and the crew of EF Language arrive in São Sebastião early yesterday to win the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World race

Cayard finds carnival welcome

FROM EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT, IN SAO SEBASTIAO

THE word from the race organisers had always been that the Brazilian stopover of the Whitbread Round the World Race was likely to be a bit chaotic. And so it was early yesterday — gloriously so, as Paul Cayard and his estatic crew on board EF Language arrived to a spontaneous carnival welcome.

The Brazilians put all the other reception committees to shame with a dockside celebration that included dancing girls, fireworks, a loud and enervating eight-piece drum band beating out the rhythms of the samba and a carnival troupe of men and women decked out in gaudy costumes and enormous feather head-dresses.

What is more, the locals turned out in their thousands. Forsaking the main carnival celebrations further down the waterfront, they waited for two hours to cheer on a group of sailors whose names many of them could not have known. They were there to welcome winners, and worthy winners too, of the toughest leg of the race.

Cayard crossed the finish line just after midnight local time after a spectacular beat up the last ten miles to the finish through the southern entrance of the São Sebastião Channel, a large and open stretch of water that divides the mainland from São

Sebastião Island. It was an overcast and dark night with warm tropical rain washing the decks as EF Language appeared — delivered safely from the Southern Ocean — with the lights of a growing posse of spectator boats playing spotlights on her sails.

The flotilla gradually increased to about 30 vessels, including a Brazilian navy patrol boat, as the runaway winner of this fifth leg from Auckland by way of Cape Horn stepped up smartly to the line, making about 12 knots. On board, the pyrotechnics started early, with the crew letting off orange and red flares as the boat went to windward under full main and No 1 jib.

At one point, Curtis Blewitt, the bowman, was hoisted to the top of the mast, where he held a flare aloft that bathed the churning water all around EF Language in a blanket of deep red light.

After 23 days at sea, Cayard and his crew were almost overwhelmed by the cacophony of noise that greeted their arrival. Cayard — a PR man's dream — was quickly into his stride, though, giving interviews left, right and centre, in English, French or Italian, while his crew fell on plates of chicken kebabs and ice-cold beers.

Among those signing autographs for the first time in his life was Mark Rudiger, EF Language's tall, bearded navigator, who took over when Nick White left the campaign shortly before the start of the race. A long-time friend of Cayard's, a fellow Californian and a veteran of single and double-handed transatlantic races and trans-Pacific races, Rudiger has played a key role in EF Language's success.

"It definitely wasn't easy, that's for sure," he said. "The first three-quarters of the leg

were all blood and guts and hard-fought miles and the last quarter was positioning."

Like everyone else on board, Rudiger was delighted with the intelligent way the crew responded to the Southern Ocean that, on leg two, had defeated them. This time, they arrived with almost no broken gear at all; the pacing had been just right.

"Basically, our victory was really in the race to the Horn," Rudiger said. "That was the big race for me — winning that part. I guess we had enough of

a lead by then and we knew we could win if we were ahead there."

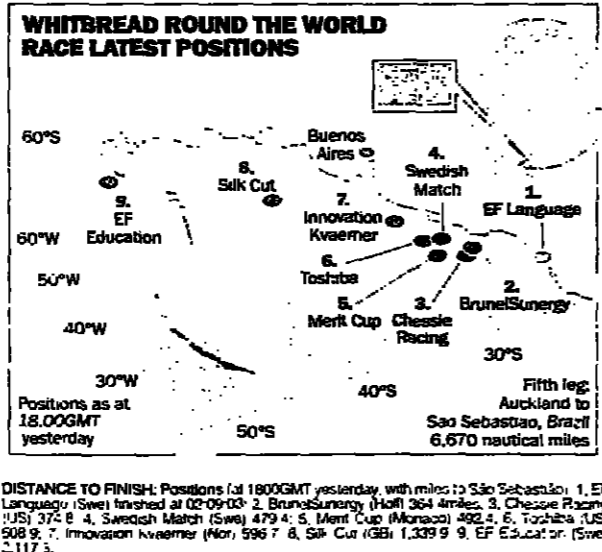
Magnus Olsson, the watch captain, summed up the more measured approach on this leg. "We learnt a lot from our mistakes and sailed so much better," he said. "We didn't try to cope with everything — we dealt with the conditions without stressing us or the boat."

Olsson, who is on his fourth Whitbread, is not making the mistake of allowing himself to think that EF Language might win this race, even though she is likely to emerge from this leg with a lead of almost 100 points. "For me the Whitbread starts now," he said.

"There are four legs ahead of us and we have to win those four legs — what we have done so far is a bonus."

As if to underline that commitment, the EF Language crew declined Cayard's offer of a day off yesterday and were busy unstepping the mast and getting the boat out of the water.

Back on the race course, the Dutch crew on BrunelSurgery were still holding second place just ahead of the Americans on Cheslie Racing, who have reported some problems with their rig and may ease off slightly into the finish. Both boats were 100 miles ahead of the chasing group and are expected to arrive here some time tomorrow.



WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 37

- URTICA (b) A genus of apetalous plants, typical of the Natural Order Urticaceae, including the trac nettle. Also, a plant of this, a stinging nettle.
- TELSON (b) The last segment of the abdomen or its median axis in certain crustaceans and arachnids. In the lobster, the best bit.
- TREVAT (c) An instrument with a sharp blade formerly used for cutting the loops which form the pile of velvet. Walton carpets, etc. when handwoven.
- TANTRA (c) One of a class of Hindu religious works in Sanskrit. From the Sanskrit for loom or warp, hence groundwork, principle, system, doctrine.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... b4 2 Rxd5 (2 axb4 b2 and queens)... bax3 and a pawn will inevitably promote.

TELEVISION CHOICE

How to make a killing

Modern Times Shooting Versace
BBC2, 9.00pm

Hardly has the body of the murdered fashion designer Gianni Versace gone cold than the film makers move in. First off the blocks is a small company based in Miami. It hires Menahem Golan, once a big noise in Hollywood and owner of the Cannon cinema chain, to write and direct the story of the Versace killing. The plan is to shoot the film in only 18 days and have it in the cinemas by Christmas. Famous for making action films at breakneck speed, Golan can do it if anybody can. But, as Christopher Sykes's diverting documentary reveals, filming against time and money is prone to mishaps. The lunch truck goes lost, the set designer goes missing and a vital location turns out to be under the main flightpath to Miami airport. Worst of all, Golan himself storms off the set and threatens not to return.

The Ten Deadliest Snakes in the World
ITV, 9.00pm

Conveniently for this documentary the planet's ten most venomous snakes all live in Australia. And there is nobody better qualified than Steve Irwin to travel the country and find them in the wild. Having caught his first crocodile at nine he is used to dealing with danger, though he insists that snakes are gentle and beautiful creatures who are likely to be more afraid of us than we are of them. Like a Miss World contest he deals with his subjects in reverse order. He therefore starts with the tenth most deadly snake, a western brown, discovered under a house in the suburbs of Darwin. For many of us, watching snakes from the safety of the television screen will be scary enough. For Irwin, though, they hold no terrors. He not only picks them up but allows the most venomous of all to lick his face.

Trouble At The Top
BBC2, 9.50pm

The company in trouble this week is the D'Oyly Carte, founded in 1885 to perform the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan and still doing so. But only just. The organisation is broke and the tour which began in September may be the last. The D'Oyly Carte has a rich benefactor in Sir Michael Bishop.



Transporting elephants (BBC1, 10.45pm)

chairman of the British Midland airline. But he has already poured £1 million into the company and thinks it is about time for somebody else, notably the Arts Council, to stump up. The Arts Council is unenthusiastic and demands a report into the company's current operation and future prospects. Critics say the D'Oyly Carte is stuck in the past. Linda McDougall's film works well as a cliffhanger — will they get the money or won't they? — but leaves out a key piece of information: the size of the audiences.

The Mission
BBC1, 10.45pm

The Kruger National Park in South Africa may be the size of Wales but it has too many elephants and hundreds are culled every year. Enser Du Roux Gruber, the park's new head vet, with an ambitious rescue plan. He wants to move entire families of elephants out of the park and has found what could be the ideal destination. This is a private reserve in KwaZulu Natal, where elephants once roamed freely. Sue Bourne's film follows an operation which is both expensive and dangerous. It involves anaesthetising the wild elephants with darts and loading the drugged animals which can weigh up to eight tons, on to specially reinforced trucks. Those who saw Martin Chuse's elephant documentary over Christmas will find it familiar, but he was looking at one animal and here there are dozens. Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

In The Name of Security: The Trials of Alger Hiss
Radio 4, 7.20pm

This is the start of a three-part series on important espionage trials in the United States this century, so the programmes have the side benefit of reminding us that Britain was not the only redoubt of double agents during the Cold War. Each programme takes the form of a drama documentary and draws heavily on the court records as well as using later interviews. Alger Hiss died only recently (1996) and maintained his innocence throughout, both of the espionage and the perjury accusations that were brought against him. There is a secondary interest in his trial for espionage during the late 1940s for this was the first time that a trial had been televised.

On Giant's Shoulders
Radio 4, 9.00pm

The first series of this history of science was a meeting piece of work and the second series shows every sign of being just as compulsive. Melvyn Bragg, broadcaster and Times columnist, is again the presenter and he begins tonight with *The Man Who Discovered Chaos By Accident*. The programme debunks the notion that chaos theory is a product of the late 20th century and instead introduces us to a remarkable encounter: the French mathematician Henri Poincaré, who won every science prize going in his day, including no fewer than 51 nominations for the Nobel Prize. But it was a slight error in one of the formulae he developed in the course of winning one prize that led to his discovery of chaos theory. Peter Barnard

RADIO 1

6.30am Kevin Greening and Zola Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whiley, includes 12.30pm Newsbeat 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Dave Pearce, includes 4.30 Newsbeat 6.30 The Evening Session 8.30 Movie Update 8.40 John Peel 10.30 Mary Ann Hobbs 1.00am Cive Warren 4.00 Chris Moyles

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Water Up To Wogan 8.30 Ken Bruce 10.00 Anne Beckett 11.00 Double Trouble 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Nick Barandough 8.00 Ralph McTel 9.00 Hooters Radio 9.30 Bill Cotton's Double Bill 9.50 Cotton takes about the 50 years in showbusiness 10.00 The Steve Wright Picture Show 10.30 Richard Ainslie 12.00am Steve Madden 3.00 Alan Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am The Breakfast Programme 9.00 Nicky Campbell 12.00 Melvyn Bragg 2.00pm News on Five 4.00 Nationwide with Juan Worricker 7.00 News Extra with David McNeil 7.30 Sports International's Football Night, includes the National Lottery Draw 10.00 LineOne 11.00 News Extra 12.00 After Hours 2.00am Up All Night with Virgin Shipyard 5.00 Morning Reports

RHINO RADIO

5.00am Jeremy Clark 7.00 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show 10.00 Russ Williams (1.00pm) Nick Abbot 4.00 Robin Jarvis 7.00 (FM) Paul Coyle (AM) Ray Coles 10.00 Caimin Jones 2.00am Richard Porter

TALK RADIO

6.30am Kirsty Young with Bill Overton 8.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00 Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Peter Dinkley 7.00am Radio 5 Live 9.00 James White 1.00am Ian Collins 3.00 The Early Show

RADIO 3

5.00am On Air, with Stephanie Hughes. Warlock (Sarcasms for strings); Charpentier (Magnificat); Bach (Prelude); Debussy (Suite Coppélia); Beethoven (Overture, The Consecration of the House); Monteverdi (Beatus Vir); Strauss (Don Juan)
9.00 Masterworks, with Peter Hobbby. Prokofiev (Mephisto Waltz); End of the Fairy Tale, Waltz Suite); Bach (Orchestral Suite No 2 in B minor); Tchaikovsky, orch Glazunov (Souvenir of an Uncle); Chopin (Prelude); Debussy (Suite Coppélia); 10.30 Artist of the Week: Cecile Ousset. The pianist Cecile Ousset talks to Joan Bakewell about what French music means to her
11.00 Society of Great Designers. Peggy Reynolds presents a profile of Margot Fonteyn, who had one of the longest careers as a ballerina ever — over 40 years
12.00 Composer of the Week: Sebastian. Live from the Chapel of St John's College, Cambridge. Includes Resonance (Echoré), Psalm 61, Miserere Mei (Alleluia), First Lesson, Daniel 9, w-19; Antiphon: Non in Solo Pane; Canticles, Short Service (Gyrfylk); Sanctus, Gloria; First Lesson, w-19; Antiphon: Alleluia Domine deus Sabaoth; Hymn: Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended

(Hörliedster Jesu); Choral Prelude: Aus Tiefen Not, BWV658 (Bach); Director of music Christopher Robinson. Organ student Robert Housart
5.00 In Tune. Includes music by Elgar and Tchaikovsky, and a review of some new CD releases. Plus a performance of Bach's Branderburg Concerto No 1 in G
7.00 Performance on 3: Billy Budd, Chris de Souza introduces Welsh National Opera's new production of Britten's opera, set on HMS Indomitable, an 18th-century battleship. This performance was given last night at the New Theatre, Cardiff. With Christopher Maltman, baritone; Robert Tear, tenor; Chorus and Orchestra of Welsh National Opera under Andrew Litton
10.10 Postscript: Twist in the Tale. Jennifer Verma, Mezzosoprano and Robert Irwin explore the legend of Aodhán (S)
10.25 A Fairytale Ending. Bernard Gregor-Smith, cello; Tancas Wrigley, piano; Jenaeck (Pohodra)
10.45 Night Waves. Patrick Wright reassesses the Communist Manifesto, 150 years after it was published. Plus a review of Aristed; the controversial new film from Steven Spielberg
11.30 Composer of the Week: Gustav Shostakovich (I) 12.30am Jazz Notes. Digby Falves presents sessions featuring Alan Barnes. Tonight, he is joined by the other members of his trio, Tim Wells, bass; and Bryan Spring, drums
1.00 Through the Night, with Donald Macleod

RADIO 3

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12.00 Composer of the Week: Sebastian. Live from the Chapel of St John's College, Cambridge. Includes Resonance (Echoré), Psalm 61, Miserere Mei (Alleluia), First Lesson, Daniel 9, w-19; Antiphon: Non in Solo Pane; Canticles, Short Service (Gyrfylk); Sanctus, Gloria; First Lesson, w-19; Antiphon: Alleluia Domine deus Sabaoth; Hymn: Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended

(Hörliedster Jesu); Choral Prelude: Aus Tiefen Not, BWV658 (Bach); Director of music Christopher Robinson. Organ student Robert Housart
5.00 In Tune. Includes music by Elgar and Tchaikovsky, and a review of some new CD releases. Plus a performance of Bach's Branderburg Concerto No 1 in G
7.00 Performance on 3: Billy Budd, Chris de Souza introduces Welsh National Opera's new production of Britten's opera, set on HMS Indomitable, an 18th-century battleship. This performance was given last night at the New Theatre, Cardiff. With Christopher Maltman, baritone; Robert Tear, tenor; Chorus and Orchestra of Welsh National Opera under Andrew Litton
10.10 Postscript: Twist in the Tale. Jennifer Verma, Mezzosoprano and Robert Irwin explore the legend of Aodhán (S)
10.25 A Fairytale Ending. Bernard Gregor-Smith, cello; Tancas Wrigley, piano; Jenaeck (Pohodra)
10.45 Night Waves. Patrick Wright reassesses the Communist Manifesto, 150 years after it was published. Plus a review of Aristed; the controversial new film from Steven Spielberg
11.30 Composer of the Week: Gustav Shostakovich (I) 12.30am Jazz Notes. Digby Falves presents sessions featuring Alan Barnes. Tonight, he is joined by the other members of his trio, Tim Wells, bass; and Bryan Spring, drums
1.00 Through the Night, with Donald Macleod

RADIO 3

5.55am (LW) Shipping Forecast 6.00 New Briefing 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today 8.40 Yesterday in Parliament 8.58 Weather 9.00 News 9.05 Midweek, with the Times columnist
10.00 News: A Good Read. Thomas Sutcliffe talks to the inventor James Dyson and the columnist Ann Leslie about their favourite paperbacks
10.00 (W) News: Daily Service
10.15 (LW) On The Move. News with Ian McMillan
10.30 Women's Hour, with Jenni Murray and guests
11.30 Gardeners' Question Time. John Cushnie, Bob Flowerdew and Pippa Greenwood answer questions posed by students, parents and staff of Chann Haverley School, Newbury (I)
12.00 News: You and Yours, with Mark Whitaker
12.25pm Evening Light. Peter Tinnwood's comedy with Ian Baron and Liz Goulding (4/5) 12.55: (W) 12.55: (W) 12.55: (W)
1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clark
1.40 The Archers (I) 1.55 Shipping Forecast
2.00 News: The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes: The Valley Ledge. The first of three classic mysteries by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, starring Cleo Morrison and Michael Williams. With Ian Masters and Michael Tudor Barnes (I)
2.45 Stages of Redemption. The crime writer Minette Walters reflects on themes drawn from the story of Christ's Passion (1/7)
3.00 News: The Afternoon Shift, with Daire Brehan
4.05 Kaleidoscope. Paul Gambaccini reviews the latest Steven Spielberg film, Amistad

RADIO 4

4.45 Short Story: Romance with Double Bass, by Anton Chekhov, read by Douglas Lee
5.00 PM, with Chris Lowe and Chris Lee-Porter 5.50 Shipping Forecast 5.55 Weather
6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Counterpoint. Heat eight of the general knowledge music quiz (I)
7.00 News 7.05 The Archers
7.20 In the Name of Security: The Trials of Alger Hiss (1948-50). See Choice, With David Hyde Pierce (I), Francis Guymon and Richard Hoyt Miller (1/2)
8.20 Lion's Den: Edit — Pursued by a Bear. Humphrey Carpenter presents the first of three arts debates. This week's guest is the writer and novelist Bryan Appleyard
9.00 De Gierle's Showbiz, with the Times columnist Melvyn Bragg. See Choice (1/2)
9.30 Kaleidoscope (I) 9.59 Weather
10.20 The World Tonight, with Robin Lustig
10.45 Book at Bedtime. The Bookshop, by P. Fitzgerald (8/10)
11.00 We Know Everything. The last in the series of the comedy sketch show
11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament
11.30 Life, Death and Sex with Little and Sue. Another chance to hear: Peter Hill and Sue. Anne and Nick. With Robert Duncan, Jan Ravens, Roger Blake, Bill Dare, Alistair McGowan and Sally Phillips (I)
12.00 News 12.30am The Late Book: Lucky You, by Carl Hiaason. Read by Katy Shaw (8/10)
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 AM World Service

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مكتبة الادب

Darkling Sussex and doctoring Somerset

This may be a risky time to be priggish about country folk, as Simon Nye has been in his new six-part comedy drama *How Do You Want Me* (BBC2). Tony Blair's feverishly fanged image of Cool Britannia, resists almost entirely on backpacking Japanese and German youths who, on their wanderers through the Lake District and West Country, spot the natives topped up in 1970s flared trousers and striped tank tops and shirt collars large enough to land a Harrier jet on and think to themselves that if even rural folk do this, then Britain must be a wickedly cool place indeed. They are unaware that these people have been dressing in 1970s fashions since 1984.

Still, if drama demands conflict, then were in for a very dramatic series. Dylan Moran, who plays Ian Lyons, has just moved to the country with his new wife, Lisa (Charlotte Coleman). Ian hates the

country. Neither is he all that keen on his pro-faced, turkey-farming in-laws, Ashley and Pam Yardley (Frank Finlay and Diana Fairley). There is a *Vicar Of Dibley*-ish flavour about the cast of "characters" assembled for us in this Sussex village (the appearance of Emma Chambers, Dawn French's half-witted, sidekick in *Dibley*, supposed to be an in-joke or just coincidence?), but it's much, much darker than *Dibley* or than Nye's own *Men Behaving Badly*.

Nye has been bold to go for a comedy with so few jokes in it, and to dispense with the sitcom safety-net of studio-audience laughter. Casting Moran to walk this tightrope was inspired. He seems to make the transition from stand-up to acting seem much more effortless than his fellow comedians have shown it to be. Moran has said that he was allowed to improvise a lot. It shows from his deadpan delivery, which squeezes

humour out of lines that would have fallen flat had he uttered them with the customary sitcom gurning, but might well sound pallid if delivered by someone who lacked Moran's comic timing. Judging a new comedy series from its first episode is like judging a person's looks from their telephone voice. But Nye has gathered a sparkling cast and created characters in whom you are interested enough to tune in next week. What more could you ask for?

A jaunty view of the countryside, BBC1's latest doctored-up, which teased us into watching the goings-on in a surgery in the Somerset seaside town of Minehead by asking: "How do doctors deal with difficult patients? What really happens when the surgery door closes and consultations begin? And how does a pig called 'Patience' help a hard-working GP unwind after a punishing day in the surgery?"

A GP unwinding with a Gloucester Old Spot? We have all heard rumours about what goes on in remote rural communities, but was the BBC really going to broadcast it before the nine o'clock watershed? Well, it turned out that it was all very innocent and that Paul Slade, one of the doctors in the practice (he's the one

with the 1970s aviator spectacles and the 1970s haircut and the 1970s MGB), keeps 25 sheep and two pigs on a smallholding. But you can still foresee this series - part *Dr Finlay's Casebook*, part *All Creatures Great And Small*, but without the cost of a scriptwriter - taking off. Something to do with the doctors' bedside manner. Also what better hook with which to lure viewers than people with diseases: will Frank have another out-of-body experience? Are Tina's children epileptic? Will Dr Slade continue to treat former heroin addict Paul?

Slade, and his colleague Huw Thomas, are both genial types. I suspect they will soon be receiving sacks of fan mail and marriage proposals from lovestruck females (maybe also a letter from John Prescott or Frank Dobson asking why neither of them seems to bother with seatbelts when they're driving). Next stop will be appear-

ances by *Dr Slade* and *Dr Thomas* as medical pundits on television programmes. After that, maybe a quiz show: *Name That Disease*. Now that doctored-up has created their own gang of famous hotel managers, learner drivers, cruise-ship crooners, airport bosses and theme-park operators, they could compete against each other in doctored-up quizzes, in which the Adelphi Hotel's Eileen will be asked to recite the symptoms of hepatitis, while Dr Slade will be questioned on how long it takes a chambermaid to change a bed.

Yet another television option would be for "characters" from one doctored-up to make guest appearances on a rival one. Maybe learner-driver Maureen could be receptionist for a day at the Adelphi. Me, I'd love to watch Sunderland's Scouse manager, Peter Reid - the "star" of Premier Passions, last night's other new

doctored-up from BBC1 - taking Dr Slade's morning surgery in Minehead. Reid swears as if he has signed a sponsorship deal with the letter "R", and is on a fat commission to use it frequently. The only fan mail Reid can hope for is from viewers who enjoy being the victim of someone who seems to be suffering from Tourette's syndrome.

But what a treat it would be to watch Reid in the surgical Patient: "I've got this ticklish sort of cough, doctor." Reid: "F'n ticklish sort of 'n cough? F'n 'n my pambly, are ya? No f'n aspirin at home you could have f'n taken and f'n saved f'n wasn't my f'n time?" Within a morning, Dr Slade and Dr Thomas could rid themselves of every "I-thought-it-best-to-pop-in, just-in-case" malingering on their register. And with his seemingly large collection of lurid, 1970s-style ties, Reid will fit into rural life - no f'n problem at all.



REVIEW
Joe Joseph

BBC1
8.00am Business Breakfast (47835)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (17019)
9.00 Style Challenge (8194835)
9.25 Change That (1056670)
9.50 Kilroy (1210747)
10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1213941)
10.55 The Really Useful Show (7039361)
12.00 News (1) (8033903)
12.05pm Call My Bluff (1028282)
12.35 Wipeout (659212)
1.00 News (2) and weather (10106)
1.30 Regional News (1) (71515835)
1.40 The Weather Show (45627895)
1.45 Newsline (1) (21230654)
2.10 Ironside (1) (8192729)
3.00 Lion Country: The leopards become concerned about the health of old lioness Petra; Cella the sealion makes friends with the hippos (5187)
3.30 Playdays (4055903) 3.50 ChuckieVision (4055767) 4.10 Get Your Own Back (8585233) 4.25 The Wild House (8585748) 5.00 Newsround (1) (7030632) 5.10 Blue Peter (1) (4236903)
5.35 Neighbours (1) (1253318)
6.00 News (1) and weather (598)
6.30 Regional News (1) (830)
7.00 Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook! Sally Gunnell and Roger Black challenge Kevin Woodford and Lesley Walters (1) (9516)
7.30 Tomorrow's World: Jazz Nelson reports on an expedition which could vastly improve cliff safety, while Craig Doyle makes a shellfish farmer produce bigger and cheaper oysters (1) (274)
8.00 Doctors' Orders: Expectant mother Jenny is banking on GP Paul Slade to convince her that her fourfold child can be delivered at home (1) (8816)
8.45 The National Lottery Draw (1) (821057)
9.00 News (1) and weather (2835)
9.30 The Thin Blue Line: An illegal asylum-seeker arrives in Gosforth. Glim prepares for his initiation into a secret society. Police comedy starring Rowan Atkinson and David Haig (1) (1) (8212)
10.00 The X-Files: Demons Mulder wakes up in a strange hotel room with blood on his hands and no recollection of how he got there (1) (90487)
10.44 National Lottery Update (968477)
10.45 The Mission: Operation Elephant: The head vet of South Africa's Kruger National Park sets out to roundup white rhinos elsewhere rather than cull them (1) (89125) WALESS: 10.45 The State (428293) 11.15 The Mission (82485) 12.05am FILM: Blind Judgement (4377892) 1.30 News (502715) 1.35 BBC News 24
11.35 Blind Judgement (1921) with Peter Croy and Lesley Ann Warren. A lawyer finds his life falling apart when he takes on the defence of a woman on murder charges. Directed by George Kaczender (1) (101835)
1.00am Weather (595977)
1.05 BBC News 24

BBC2
6.35am The Last of the Liberty Ships (3549767)
7.00 Sun. Morn. Breakfast News (1 and singing) (3728280)
7.15 Teleshopping (1) (5007187) 7.40 The Wacky Races (7074558) 8.00 Record Breakers: Gold (1) (1447458) 8.25 Postman Pat (8477477) 8.45 The Record (8451038)
9.10 Short Circuit (8087448) 9.30 Job Bank (2197831) 9.45 Words and Pictures (7147338) 10.00 Teleshopping (1) (90300) 10.30 Numbers (1) (505748) 10.45 'Cats' Eyes (3848903) 11.00 Around Scotland (2185670) 11.20 The Geography Programme (1) (8080477) 11.40 Working It Out (2880309) 11.55 Hands Up! (907651)
12.10pm Science in Action (1046748) 12.30 Working Lunch (44030) 1.00 Noddy (1) (1136493) 1.10 The Crab Hour (8082503) 2.10 Tennis (8245551) 2.40 News (1) (8229293) 2.45 Westminster (9633477) 3.45 News (1) (5360306)
4.00 Real Rooms (1) (5347458) 4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook! (5340545) 4.55 Esther: punctuality (612854) 5.25 Today's the Day (4249600) 5.50 Lifetime (172011)
6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (1) (1) (39135)
6.45 Stivers (1) (1) (807941)
7.30 Pound for Pound: Can consumers save money by shopping around for their gas and electricity? (818)
8.00 Home Front in the Garden: An urban jungle keeps the Home Front team busy (1) (1) (4458)
8.30 The Travel Show Report on the growing trend toward one-stop shopping at supermarkets. Last in series (8293)

BBC3
6.00am GMTV (5311309)
9.25 Win, Lose or Draw (1) (8182090)
9.55 Regional News and weather (8559941)
10.00 The Time, The Place (1) (90654)
10.30 This Morning (1) (5370458)
12.20pm Regional News (8939187)
12.30 News (1) and weather (8552309)
12.55 Shortland Street (6457800) 1.25 Home and Away (1) (70536748) 1.50 Crossroads (21213187) 2.20 Chef School 2.20 Chef School (92386632) 2.50 Vanessa (1) (6807651)
3.20 News (1) (5283106)
3.25 Regional News and weather (582477)
3.30 Top TV (1227670) 3.40 The Glob (6394274) 3.55 The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh (4070835) 4.10 Animaniacs (1) (4788477) 4.45 How Goes 2 (1) (8459800)
5.10 WALESS: Moneybags (1) (580583)
5.10 Van Can Cook (808583)
5.40 News (1) and weather (827090)
6.00 Home and Away (1) (1) (337729)
6.25 Regional Weather (878125)
6.30 Regional News (455)
7.00 Emmerdale: Jane makes more of an effort with Sarah (1) (5554)
7.30 Coronation Street: Pam's actions shock Fiona to the core (1) (670)
8.00 Des O'Connor Tonight: The entertainer is joined by Michael Keaton, Mariah Carey, Kevin Kline, Clopeatra, Alan Davies and Elaine Paige (8380)



Snake in the grass (9.00pm)

As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (6457800)
1.55-2.40 Shortland Street (5825583)
6.25-7.00 Central News (5429293)
1.00am Film: Harlequin (1980), A drama starring Robert Powell and David Hemmings (73625)
3.00 If I Were You (26572)
5.10-5.40 The Time, The Place (42715)
4.30 Central Jobfinder '98 (1086322)
5.20 Asian Eye (1380930)

WESTCOUNTRY
As HTV West except:
12.20pm-12.30 Illuminations (8939187)
12.55 Home and Away (6457800)
1.25-1.50 Emmerdale (7053674)
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (580583)
6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (58235)

MERIDIAN
As HTV West except:
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (580583)
6.00 Meridian Tonight (108)
6.30-7.00 Streetwork (458)
5.00am FreeScreen (48242)

ANGLIA
As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25 Surprise Chets (6457800)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (5825583)
6.23 Anglia Weather (979854)
6.25-7.00 Anglia News (5429293)
10.29 Anglia Air Watch (871309)
11.40 Crime Night (465090)
12.00am Anatomy of Disaster: Series documenting natural disasters and their devastating effects (825442)
1.10 Recollections (5060628)

SAC
Starts: 6.00 Sesame Street (30545)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (96859)
9.00 Yagellon (102816)
11.30 Powerhouse (6038)
12.00 Ricki Lake (35583)
12.30pm Sesame Street (46458)
1.00 Spot Meltrin (11373651)
1.15 Sperdyde (11378106)
1.30 Living Sex (45729)
2.00 Faulty Tours (2090)
2.30 The Windmills: The Sale of a Lifetime (40922)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (689)
4.30 Countdown (583)
5.00 5 Pump (1136496)
5.15 Piff (7042477)
5.30 Shop Till You Drop (835)
6.00 Newyddion (878293)
6.10 Heno (873187)
7.00 Pobl y Cwm (288309)
7.25 Ffawc (483583)
8.00 Ffawc (2854)
8.30 Newyddion (1361)
9.00 Cutting Edge (1458)
10.00 Brookside (447699)
10.35 ER (317019)
11.30 Frasier (87390)
12.00 Under the Moon (4057856)
4.30am Athletics (50171)
5.00-5.30 Screaming Reels (60464)

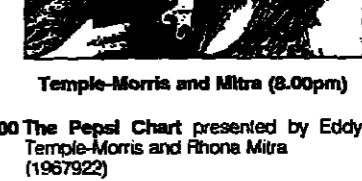
5.55am Sesame Street (30545)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (96859)
9.00 Schools: The Enterprise Zone (23019)
9.30 Good Health Guide (1) (9797659)
9.45 Book Box (1) (557455) 10.00 Stage Two Science (1) (4757540) 10.15 Raf-a-Tat-Tat (4770496) 10.30 The French Programme (1) (9137274) 10.50 Stop, Look, Listen (8843187) 11.00 First Edition V (6890729) 11.15 The Mix (1) (6663980)
11.30 Powerhouse (1) (6038) 12.00 Sesame Street (30545) 12.30pm Light Lunch With Julia: Julia and the Living Sea Wings Beneath the Sea (1) (1) (45729) 2.00 Faulty Tours: Russian holidaymakers in Blackpool (1) (1) (2090)
2.30 The Windmills: The Sale of a Lifetime Today's lots include a collection of ceramic pig dogs and the Duchess's wardrobe (40922)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (1) (689) 4.30 Countdown (1) (6572187) 4.35 Ricki Lake: Sibling rivalry (1) (7812055) 5.30 Per Rescue (1) (835)
6.00 Party of Five Julia doubts Griffin's commitment to their wedding day (1) (37903)
6.50 Fresh Pop (275372)
7.00 Channel 4 News (1) (842187)
7.55 Citizen 2000 Rosanna films her friend's all-girl birthday party (312090)
8.00 Brookside Could it soon be wedding bells for David and Molly? Sharon is still banking on Trina (1) (2854)
8.30 TV Dinners Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall meets two more amateur cooks with something to celebrate. Tonight, celebrating the start of winter with the Celtic meal of Gornahin - a Highland-style least and a wedding anniversary (1) (1361)
9.00 ER: Freak Show Hathaway's clinic opens a week to early Doyle urges Jennie to fight for her job (1) (1458)
10.00 Madonna Meets... Not Us Gwyneth Paltrow talks to Light Lunch's Mel and Sue (37212)

8.00am 5 News Early (7846767)
7.00 Movie Cafe (1) (457861) 7.35 Wilmco's House (1) (8157854) 8.00 Havelock Education (1) (774090) 8.30 WideWorld Education on the workplace (1) (770351)
9.00 Espresso (8210363) 10.00 Secret Lives (1) (1) (2830816) 10.30 Sunset Beach (1) (3059458) 11.10 Leeza (2160835)
12.05 News (1) (7714477) 12.30pm Family Affairs (1) (1) (782616) 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (1) (4569222) 1.30 The Great Garden Game (1) (776187) 2.00 Beauty and the Beast (2631545) 3.00 100 Per Cent Gold (196293)
3.30 Amore! (1953) with Jack Scallia, Kathy Ireland and George Hamilton. A millionaire abandons his money in an attempt to become a Hollywood star. Directed by Lorenzo Doumani (8638800)
5.20 Russell Grant's Postcards Heatherden Hall, Pinnerwood (19105477)
5.30 Exclusive Entertainment news with Sara Cox (4100038)
6.00 100 Per Cent A game show with Sara Cox (4190651)
6.30 Family Affairs Nick is worried when Liam stays out all night (1) (4181903)
7.00 5 News (1) (858274)
7.30 Secret Lives: Octopus's Garden A documentary about the octopus, one of the strangest creatures of the deep (1) (418187)

8.00 The Pop Chart presented by Eddy Temple-Morris and Rhona Mitra (1957922)
8.30 Food Fight Comedy quiz with Andy Parsons, Henry Naylor and Sara Cox (1952829)
9.00 The Heidi Chronicles (1995) with Jamie Lee Curtis, Tom Hulce and Kim Cattrall. Drama following 30 years in the life of a feminist campaigner and her husband. Adapted from a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Wendy Wasserstein. Directed by Paul Bogart (1) (96101564)
10.50 The Jack Docherty Show Chat and comedy (8131853)
11.35 Movie Cafe (1) (5482039)
12.05am Live and Dangerous Sports magazine with Todd MacIn who introduces the best of the American sports action including college football and baseball (51504828)
5.30 100 Per Cent (8506775)



Joey faces a dilemma (10.30pm)



Temple-Morris and Mitra (8.00pm)

SKY 1
7.00am Street Strips (98767) 7.30 Bump in the Night (98767) 7.45 The Simpsons (85825) 8.15 Oprah (851106) 8.30 Murphy Brown (85825) 9.30 Murphy Brown (85825) 10.00 Another World (85825) 11.00 Day of Our Lives (85825) 12.00 Married with Children (85825) 1.00 Family Guy (85825) 1.30 The Simpsons (85825) 2.00 The Simpsons (85825) 2.30 The Simpsons (85825) 3.00 The Simpsons (85825) 3.30 The Simpsons (85825) 4.00 The Simpsons (85825) 4.30 The Simpsons (85825) 5.00 The Simpsons (85825) 5.30 The Simpsons (85825) 6.00 The Simpsons (85825) 6.30 The Simpsons (85825) 7.00 The Simpsons (85825) 7.30 The Simpsons (85825) 8.00 The Simpsons (85825) 8.30 The Simpsons (85825) 9.00 The Simpsons (85825) 9.30 The Simpsons (85825) 10.00 The Simpsons (85825) 10.30 The Simpsons (85825) 11.00 The Simpsons (85825) 11.30 The Simpsons (85825) 12.00 The Simpsons (85825) 12.30 The Simpsons (85825) 1.00 The Simpsons (85825) 1.30 The Simpsons (85825) 2.00 The Simpsons (85825) 2.30 The Simpsons (85825) 3.00 The 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RACING 37

Balding launches broadside at BBC complacency

SPORT

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25 1998

SAILING 42

Carnival welcome for Cayard as he docks in Brazil



Oliver Holt is on hand to witness the sudden demise of another Premiership manager

Little's reign at Villa cut short

Standing ovation reflected support

By RICHARD HOBSON

I started early yesterday afternoon when one of the secretaries in the main reception at Aston Villa had returned from lunch. There was the sound of footsteps on the stairs and Brian Little popped his head round the corner. He was affability itself. He apologised for being late and said it might be another half an hour before he was ready to do the interview. "Something's come up with the chairman," he said.

The film crews and radio reporters were beginning to arrive now and a couple of police horses and their riders appeared at the main gates. Ellis agreed to read out the statement for the cameras. Looking as old as his 75 years, he hobbled down the stairs from his office. He said he had injured his knee playing tennis. Then he sank into a sofa. "I am sad and disappointed to announce that Brian Little has resigned as manager of Aston Villa Football Club forthwith," he said. "We are in the process of securing the services of another team manager but in the meantime, Allan Evans and the coaching staff of Kevin MacDonald, Tony McAndrew, Malcolm Beard and Paul Barron will be in charge. We wish Brian the best of luck in whatever he chooses to do in the future."



Little's reign at Villa Park has not been without its moments of deep frustration and torment. Photograph: Mike Cooper/Allsport

SOME of Aston Villa's most faithful supporters, the members of the Shareholders' Association, turned out at their annual meeting on Monday night determined to grill Brian Little about Stan Collymore and Savo Milosevic. After more than two hours of intensive questioning, the shareholders were reassured to such an extent that Little received the first standing ovation for a Villa manager in the memory of Buck Chinn, the association chairman. Little fulfilled a long-standing commitment to attend rather than fly to Spain, where Atlético Madrid, the opponents in the Uefa Cup quarter-final next Tuesday, were playing Real Zaragoza. Chinn could not hide his admiration for Little — indeed, he felt that what amounted to a massive show of confidence would hold the manager in good stead. "When things have been difficult in the past, a number of managers have said they could not come. Brian not only kept his promise, but answered everything honestly and openly. He is a man of great integrity," Chinn said.



the car park. "This will only take a second," he said.

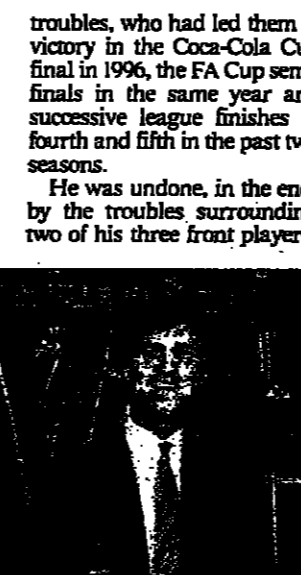
Once outside, his face was set but his manner was agitated and angry. "I have not got anything to say this afternoon," he said. "I am going home. Any questions you have, you can refer to the chairman." Then he strode off towards his Range Rover, jumped in and roared away into the grey streets of Aston. Ten minutes later, Allan Evans, Little's assistant, arrived. Told of the abrupt departure of the manager, he looked surprised and then bounded up the stairs to learn his own fate. He said he would be back down in five minutes but after another 20 minutes he sent word that he would not be able to make any comment. The wheels were in motion. At 4.30, as the secretaries whispered to callers on the telephones and the expressions on the faces of the men

and women who wandered through the foyer to the ticket office registered the excitement and shock of what was happening, it was made official. Abdul Rashid, the club's commercial manager, handed out a statement from Doug Ellis, the Villa chairman. It said that Brian Little had resigned. The film crews and radio reporters were beginning to arrive now and a couple of police horses and their riders appeared at the main gates. Ellis agreed to read out the statement for the cameras. Looking as old as his 75 years, he hobbled down the stairs from his office. He said he had injured his knee playing tennis. Then he sank into a sofa. "I am sad and disappointed to announce that Brian Little has resigned as manager of Aston Villa Football Club forthwith," he said. "We are in the process of securing the services of another team manager but in the meantime, Allan Evans and the coaching staff of Kevin MacDonald, Tony McAndrew, Malcolm Beard and Paul Barron will be in charge. We wish Brian the best of luck in whatever he chooses to do in the future."

another former player, David Platt, who would fit the vogue for dynamic young player-coaches. As for Little, the club say it is resignation but the apparent spontaneity of what happened, the dramatic change in his mood in the space of half an hour and timing that could hardly be worse suggest that either the two men had had an almighty row or that the notoriously short patience of the man known throughout football as Deadly Doug had worn too thin at last. The irony is that Little had left a meeting of the club's shareholders on Monday night — a meeting that was expected to damn him — warmed by a standing ovation. The final edition of the Birmingham Evening Mail yesterday even carried a banner back page headline that read "Hurrah for Brian". He was, after all, only 14 months into a new five-year contract. His position seemed to be

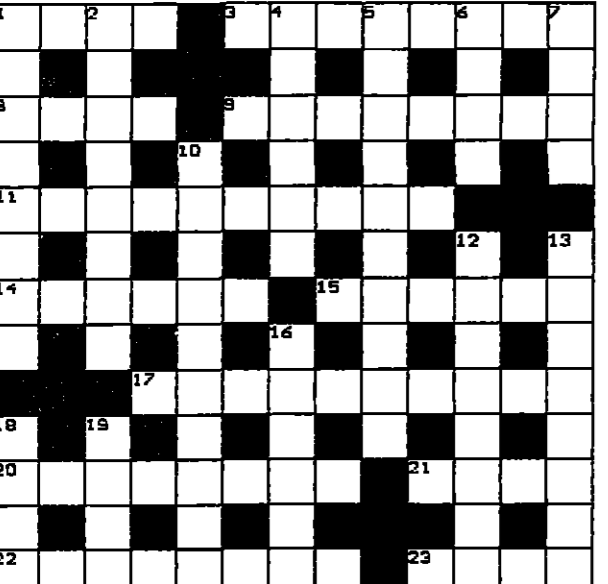
safe, at least until after Villa's European adventure came to an end, but the fact that his side were languishing in fifteenth place in the Premiership, six points above the relegation zone, and that a number of senior players such as Gareth Southgate, Dwight Yorke and Steve Staunton, were rumoured to be unhappy at the club appears to have brought things to a head earlier than expected. It was another poignant day for English football because Little was a decent man, a manager who had retained the respect of his players and the supporters despite the club's troubles, who had led them to victory in the Coca-Cola Cup final in 1996, the FA Cup semi-finals in the same year and successive league finishes of fourth and fifth in the past two seasons. He was undone, in the end, by the troubles surrounding two of his three front players. He spent a club record £7.5 million to bring Stan Collymore to Villa Park from Liverpool last summer but Collymore, fretful and inconsistent, repaid him with just four Premiership goals. Simultaneously, Savo Milosevic, the temperamental Serb who was involved in recent allegations of spitting at the Villa supporters, went on strike when he was dropped to substitute before he was restored to the team after a meeting with Ellis and Little. Beaten by Coventry City in the FA Cup fifth round, the first time their Midlands rivals had won at Villa Park in 62 years, and slumping in the league, Little was enduring a season from hell but enduring it with dignity and loyalty to players who were letting him down. When yesterday dawned, Little still appeared to be relishing the task ahead. Somewhere in those lost 40 minutes with Deadly Doug, it all went wrong.

THE LITTLE YEARS
1994-95: Premiership: 18th. FA Cup: fourth round. Coca-Cola Cup: fourth round. Europe: Uefa Cup, second round.
1995-96: Premiership: 4th. FA Cup: Semi-final. Coca-Cola Cup: winners. Europe: did not qualify.
1996-97: Premiership: 5th. FA Cup: fourth round. Coca-Cola Cup: fourth round. Europe: Uefa Cup, first round.
1997-98: Premiership: 15th. FA Cup: fifth round. Coca-Cola Cup: third round. Uefa Cup: quarter-final (v Atlético Madrid, next Tuesday).



Ellis, left, in ebullient mood on Little's appointment

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1338

- 1 With copper, makes brass (4)
3 Sword case (8)
5 Repetition (4)
9 Oak-wood flower (8)
11 Be assured of success (4,2,4)
14 Scuffy (6)
15 Select (6)
17 Aligned in special direction (10)
20 Eggs must be broken for it (8)
21 Lame; tiny station (4)
22 Regularity of form (8)
23 S. Am. bird; mother of Zeus (4)
- DOWN
1 Launch time (4,4)
2 (Time of) birth (8)
4 Pillar; regular article (6)
5 Exhaust by exertion (5,5)
6 Under the blankets (4)
7 Cloudy; unintelligent (4)
10 A lake rim renewed (anag.) (10)
12 Pedestrian way (8)
13 Feud (8)
16 Gambler; improving (6)
18 One in charge (4)
19 Russian port; hairstyle (4)

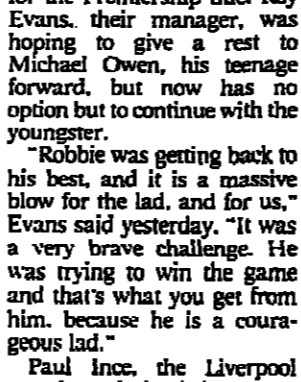
Fowler forced out of World Cup

By DAVID MADDOCK

ROBBIE FOWLER, the Liverpool and England forward, will miss the World Cup finals after having an operation yesterday to repair torn medial ligaments. He will be out of action for at least three months. Fowler damaged a knee minutes from the end of the Merseyside derby on Monday. He appeared to be caught by Thomas Myhre, the Everton goalkeeper, and, as he fell awkwardly, damaged the ligaments and cartilage as his leg was crushed under the weight of his body. A scan at a Birmingham clinic yesterday revealed the full extent of the damage and it was decided to operate immediately. "I am devastated. It has come as a terrible blow," Fowler said last night. "Missing out on the World Cup is the hardest thing to bear, because I had set my heart on playing. The doctors told me that I would be out for a minimum of three months. After the season I have had so far, it is a shocking blow. What makes it

worse is that I felt I was just coming back to top form, after I had gone through a bad patch." Fowler said that after the challenge with Myhre, he "tried to get up and run, but I was wobbling all over the place and couldn't stand up. I got to the hospital on Monday night, but didn't sleep a wink because the pain was so bad." The news will be a serious setback for Glenn Hoddle, the England manager, whose forward options are fast diminishing. He omitted Fowler from his last squad, but revealed that the Liverpool man was likely to go to France. Alan Shearer is still playing himself back after injury; Ian Wright and Les Ferdinand are both on the sidelines and Chris Sutton has apparently ruled himself out. Liverpool too, will miss Fowler, as they attempt to make up lost ground on Manchester United in the race for the Premiership title. Roy Evans, their manager, was hoping to give a rest to Michael Owen, his teenage forward, but now has no option but to continue with the youngster. "Robbie was getting back to his best, and it is a massive blow for the lad, and for us," Evans said yesterday. "It was a very brave challenge. He was trying to win the game and that's what you get from him, because he is a courageous lad." Paul Ince, the Liverpool captain, admitted it was a

severe blow to England's chances in the World Cup. "What a nightmare, it is terrible news," he said. "I feared it was serious because he was in so much pain when he got to the dressing-room afterwards. "I feel terribly upset for him. He's the best goalscorer in the league and someone you would definitely want with you in the World Cup. It's terrible news for Liverpool too — things just aren't going for us at the moment." Fowler said that although the injury was serious, it was not career-threatening. "I have been told that I will make a full recovery. What I intend to do now is work hard in the summer, and concentrate on getting back fully fit before next season." It has not been a happy week for Evans. He has only four fit defenders available and Fowler, although the most serious injury problem, is not the only one. Jamie Redknapp has damaged an ankle, Steve McManaman has a leg injury, and Ince is also struggling for fitness.



Fowler: knee operation

New laws likely to overturn MCC veto

Simon Wilde says future legislation is certain to convert reluctant members

AN embarrassing prospect awaited MCC last night after the vote to admit women members failed to get the necessary two-thirds majority. It is expected that within the next four years the law will be changed to prevent private sports clubs — such as MCC and many golf clubs — from excluding women on the basis of gender, as they are at present allowed to do under the Sex Discrimination Act. The image of English cricket could be tarnished if a section of its followers was forced into modernisation through an alteration in law rather than choosing such a course voluntarily. However, this is now the probable outcome. Last month, the Equal Opportunities

Commission (EOC) issued a consultative document in which it recommended banning sex discrimination in sport. Its plan is to be put to the Government after a three-month consultation period and leading sports lawyers expect the Government to follow its findings within the lifetime of this parliament. To save the club's face, the MCC committee, which had been hoping its members would vote strongly in favour

of admitting women, may have to put the issue to another vote — with more success — before the Government acts. MCC members came out against admitting women in 1991, when 67 per cent of those who voted rejected the proposal. "I fully expect the Government to pick up on the EOC's recommendation and change the law. It can therefore only be a matter of time before MCC has to change, but it would be much better if the change came through one of its own votes," Charles Woodhouse, president of the British Association of Sport and Law and an MCC member for 30 years, said. "I had very much hoped today's vote would come out in favour of women being allowed to join."

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